

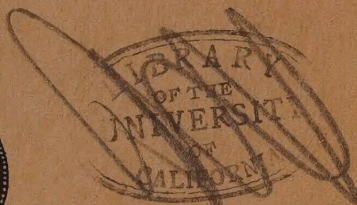
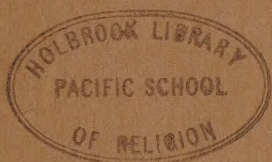
"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES." Rig-Veda

Book

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East

GIFT
JAN 26 1932



JANUARY, 1932

True Measure of Success

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Message of the East

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."

—*Ezekiel*

"Light shall come again from the East."

—*Tyndall*

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FOREWORD

By Swami Paramananda



TWO decades have passed since the inception of the MESSAGE OF THE EAST. It has carried on its modest mission with faithfulness and staunchness of spirit, and as it stands on the threshold of a new era, it is meet that it should send warm and friendly greetings to all its readers. Those who have devotedly worked for its propagation feel a deep sense of gratification that so many have found its simple mission helpful and stimulating to their spiritual venture. Once more we fix our gaze upon those principles and ideals which inspired us to send forth its first pages to the world of thought, which ever yearns for unity, harmony and tolerance.

May He who has always guided our steps and made our undertakings fruitful give us inspiration and incentive to carry on our purpose to a point of further fulfillment. This is our earnest prayer as we start a new year. Also our heart's prayers go out to all for a better, happier and more understanding world. To the East, to the West, to the North and to the South, and to all quarters, we send forth this wish for peace and abounding joy of God.

LA CRESCENTA, CALIFORNIA
December 15th, 1931

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

One must have the true mettle of a man within, if one wishes to be successful in life. But there are many who have no grit in them—who are like popped rice soaked in milk, soft and cringing. No strength within! No capacity for sustained effort! No power of will! They are the failures of life.

—Sri Ramakrishna.

Do what thy manhood bids thee do, from
none but self expect applause;
He noblest lives and noblest dies
who makes and keeps his self-made laws.

All other life is living death, a world where
none but phantoms dwell,
A breath, a wind, a sound, a voice, a tinkling
of the camel-bell.

—Richard Burton.

The man of true distinction is simple and honest, a lover of justice and duty. He weighs men's words and observes the expression of their faces. He is anxious to put himself below others. Such a one is truly distinguished.

—Confucius.

The roughest road often leads to the smoothest fortune.

—Benjamin Franklin.

There is nothing noble in being superior to some other men. The true nobility is in being superior to your previous self.

—Hindu proverb.

There is only one real failure possible; and that is, not to be true to the best one knows.

—Canon Farrar.

TRUE MEASURE OF SUCCESS

By Swami Paramananda

Many people think that ambition is the real secret of human achievement. They even repeat, as if it were a slogan, the expression, "You will never amount to anything unless you have ambition." It is not ambition alone, however, that gives us the key to the accomplishment of great things in life, but something far other than this. If we study certain of the reflections of famous men, we shall see how they have regarded this matter of success.

In the wisdom of Lao-Tzu, the Chinese philosopher, we read: "The holy man puts his person behind and his person comes to the fore. He is free from self-display, therefore he shines; from self-assertion, therefore he is distinguished; from self-boasting, therefore his merit is acknowledged." This is interesting in that it helps to give us understanding as to how the truly great achieve their greatness. Very much the same thing Christ said when He told His disciples that those who lost their life for His sake would inherit Life Eternal; but not those who were driven by a feverish desire to accomplish and acquire.

According to Abraham Lincoln, "Success does not depend so much on external help as on self-reliance." Often we hear a man say, "If only I had had opportunities!" But "the secret of success lies in embracing every opportunity of seeking high and right ends, and never forgetting the golden rule of the catechism, 'Doing your duty in that station of life to which it shall please God to call you.'"

This idea that God places us in our station may sound old-fashioned, yet who else but God does place us there, and why should we be placed in some specific station, unless there is a meaning behind it? The men who dedicate themselves to whatever is put before them do not remain station-

ary. If you doubt this, survey the whole field of human experience. No matter who the man may be, no matter how humbly he may have begun or what may be the nature of his task, if he learns the art of doing it well, he cannot help but move on to something greater. And how does he learn to do it well? Not by constantly pondering on the fame he is going to acquire or the glory he hopes to attain—that is not the way to succeed in any art—but rather by throwing himself whole-heartedly into his task as if nothing else existed. You may call this concentration. Of course it is concentration; also it is the real secret of success. Success means achievement and achievement is no make-believe game. Those who form the habit of playing such a game, who do a thing merely because it is the custom to do it, or because they want the credit for doing it, they will not find life palatable. Their heart is not in their effort, and if the heart is not there, the hand cannot accomplish, because inspiration must infuse the task.

In the Bhagavad-Gita, Sri Krishna gives a wonderful injunction to Arjuna, his disciple, whose mind is bewildered with thoughts as to the outcome of his actions. He tells him, "To work alone thou hast the right, but never to the fruits thereof." He advises him to take his mind off results: the field of action alone is for him.

It is not the man who is constantly thinking about what he is going to attain who holds the secret of success or of happiness. "Success in life is a matter not so much of talent or opportunity as of concentration and perseverance." The great Master, Sri Ramakrishna, gives a parable which illustrates this. A man once set to work to dig a well. He wanted water, but he soon found that digging was very arduous. Then someone came along and said, "You are not going to get any water there; I can show you a much better

place." Now we like to be told not to do a thing we do not want to do, so the man was susceptible to the suggestion and moved to another spot, which he soon found was no less difficult than the first place. Soon a second man came along with a similar suggestion. Again he tried digging in a new location, but everywhere the work was the same and in the end, owing to his many changes, he failed to find the water. In his self-pity he longed for sympathy, for an excuse to leave an unpleasant task, and it was given to him. For just as Divine prayers are answered, so also are ordinary whims and desires. The reason is that both originate in the mind and mind is all-powerful. It has power to create, also to uncreate, and it holds the key to success. When mind is unruly, there is not anyone, not even God, who can help us or make us victorious. Man may obtain the grace of God, also he may obtain the grace of noble souls—masters, teachers and spiritual benefactors—but if he has not the grace of his own mind, it will avail him nothing.

Seldom is it that we are entirely bereft of the presence of great souls, but it is another thing to be able to follow their inspiration and counsel. We cannot do it without the co-operation of the mind. This very existence of ours is the grace of God, but to know it is another matter. Perhaps if we did know it, our life would be very much more simple. Such knowledge would do away with this doubt of our Divine origin, which is like a stumbling block, bringing us unhappiness, and causing us to dissipate a tremendous amount of energy, because we are not sure. Mind it is that twists us: it can make the white appear as black. You may have a wonderful opportunity placed before you, but through some turn of the mind, you give a wrong interpretation and the result is failure. Failure casts an hypnotic spell over some people. The thought, the word, the very

sound of it seizes upon the mind that has made itself receptive to that type of suggestion, and drags it down. If, however, the mind is fortified, such a thought can gain no hold.

"The men whom we have seen succeed best in life have always been cheerful and hopeful men." What does being cheerful and hopeful imply but strength of character. To acquire strength of character is the greatest success of all, because it brings something that is of abiding value, something that is ours even unto death, that stands by and sustains us. Such success is a triumph. For the same reason, mere material success cannot be called true success, for it comes and goes. In saying this, I am not taking away from our ordinary understanding of the word as meaning to go through life triumphantly. Going triumphantly through life requires more than we may imagine. A good, strong, vigorous physical body is very needful, material resources may be useful, but the mind is the background of the whole.

Perseverance always wins. Someone has said: "Go on. Tomorrow lies before you. Who knows what is there? Perhaps the land of success is just beyond the horizon and tomorrow's sun will reveal it palm-fringed and glistening." In Sri Ramakrishna's parable, if the man had kept on at his original well, he would have found his water. You never know what may come. There is always tomorrow. Tomorrow is a tremendous thing, but the future can be only what our present life, thought and aspirations make possible. The glory of tomorrow depends on our today. There may be some impediment from our past, but past can be wiped out by present action; it can be counteracted. These are basic thoughts; we should never forget them. Suppose you have met with a tremendous amount of failure in the past. That does not signify that you are always going to meet with failure. I remember how Swami Vivekananda

with his great human understanding used to try to stir everyone up out of morbid feelings. His words still ring in my ears: "My friend, hundreds of times you may fall down, you may face destruction, but do not let that frighten you." What a wonderful thought! What an incentive to action! Hundreds of times we may meet with obstacles, opposition and actual failure, yet this does not mean that we are destined to fail. Success may be just at the next step.

Who does not feel the inspiration of such ideas? It is not sufficient, however, to carry them merely as slogans. They must be built into the character. Only as the character is formed so that we cannot live without them, are we able to make the most of the help that comes to us. We all know how sometimes we try to give people opportunities, money, material help, and though they take everything that we offer them, they are not able to better themselves. Here, as always, mind plays a tremendous part, and it is owing to certain sterling qualities of mind—self-reliance, hopefulness, cheerfulness—that the victory is gained.

There are certain souls who form the habit of being despondent. It is a morbid habit; also it helps to make others despondent. Whatever we dwell upon mentally we are bound to attain, and this applies equally when we keep thinking in the right way. Success is sure to come as a result of such thought, but it comes in its truest, purest form when we are not so bent on the thing itself. "Perhaps the land of success lies just beyond the horizon." The land of success! This means more than a little bit of material gain. Riches, honor, even the praise of men, all pass away. Do we not know it? Today man is successful; tomorrow his kingdom crumbles into dust. There have been many so-called successful men in the world—generals, kings, conquerors, men of talent and of power—but how does the

success which they have gained compare with the moral and spiritual triumph of one like the Christ, or St. Francis, or Mahatma Gandhi? These great souls leave their stamp on the destiny of mankind.

I give the example of Gandhi because he is living in our own time and in an era when the mind of man is peculiarly set on the success that seeks to gain everything for itself and lays special stress on ambition. Let us remember the words of Lao-Tzu: "The holy man puts his person behind and his person comes to the fore." Gandhi wants nothing for himself, he has completely renounced everything, yet everything seems to surround him. He cannot keep people away from him. It is not physical magnetism or anything of that kind: it is his pure and selfless character.

Truth is Truth. It has always been; it will always be, and man cannot alter it. Man can, however, remould his life, he can blend it harmoniously with the great fundamental principles and reap the true success, the real glory. Everyone wants success, everyone wants happiness. But the secret is that when we no longer want anything for ourselves, everything is given to us. You may say, "Well, it that is the case, I will pretend that I do not want anything for myself." Once more let me say that we cannot play a make-believe game. This is not a thing that can be done artificially. Our mind, our heart, are like a vessel. When this vessel is cleansed of all baser matter—ambition and human petty means—then it has room to hold the beautiful and the sublime. That is what is meant by purity of purpose. Man's mind is now filled with all kinds of things which make it impossible for him to partake of the True, the Divine; and unless he can do so, unless these qualities form the basis for his actions, how can he know success?

Christ gave the principle for true attainment. "Seek ye

first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." We find the echo of this in the great Vedic period—that time of deep contemplation and search for Truth. The disciple comes to the Master and says, "Sire, tell us That, by knowing which everything becomes known; by means of which man finds his fulfillment." And the Master without hesitation replies, "Verily thou art That. Thou hast That within Thyself." The power of attainment lies within, but man cannot command it so long as he bends his gaze toward the lower planes of life, seeking the crumb of worldly success, quarrelling over it, fighting over it, making himself small and insignificant because of it. Only when man attains his true Selfhood which is in God, which is Truth itself, does his life become victorious.

We can approach this great consummation in any way that we wish—from the dualistic attitude with the light of devotion, or with the sense of oneness in the great Unity of life—it does not matter. Ultimately, however we may view it, we come to the same lofty realization and lay aside all the petty concerns of existence. Right thought is the way. It is a wonderful thing! A man is filled with the thought of his own insignificance and immediately life seems a weariness. Weighted down with obligations and duties, he feels that he has been given more than he can carry, and his heart grows bitter over what seems the injustice of it all. Then a higher thought enters his mind. He becomes aware that however he may be situated, he is placed there with a Divine purpose by an all-intelligent Hand, and that that Hand will never fail him no matter how hard his lot may seem. At once his life glows with beauty and meaning.

Hardship never destroyed anyone. On the contrary, sometimes it is very beneficent. Fire burns the gold so that

it can be moulded more perfectly, polished and made into a lovely ornament. So also is it with our life and its trials and tribulations. "No opposition, no success." Swami Vivekananda used to say this. "Hundreds of times you may fall down, but do not let that frighten you." Who knows what is coming next? You may find the fulfillment of your greatest desire. We must face everything. "No opposition, no success." That is an extraordinary thing about life: troubles, difficulties, obstacles strike upon it just as the steel strikes the flint and the soul of man seems to flare up with fire, revealing the beauty that is inherent. At the outset, however, when we first feel the blow, we are so frightened that we draw back, paralysed with the thought that we are going to fail, to be crushed—defeated. This should not be.

Man cannot think of one thing and obtain another. He who thinks of his weakness becomes weak; he is hypnotized by his own thought. Even though you may be conscious of your failures and shortcomings, you should work with greater dedication, never forgetting that the real secret lies there, rather than in dwelling upon what you are going to attain. Dreaming about some beautiful heaven that is coming to you—about future fame, glory, success—spending more time on these thoughts than in doing what lies before you, this accomplishes nothing. You should reverse the order. Let your dreams and fancies rest. Work with your hands, with inspiration in your heart and faith in your soul. Think of all the energy you fritter away through your imaginings, or to put it in plain language, through your idle dreams. What we need is to bring ourselves together in one-pointed effort. Call it concentration, the method of the Yogis, call it anything you please—it doesn't matter what you call it—only apply it. For it is a fundamental fact that when we can bring ourselves to such tremendous focusing,

whatever the nature of our task may be, work becomes worship. Work is worship for the man who understands it, who dedicates himself to it, and carries it in the right spirit. Also it can be a desecration. Anything we do reluctantly, without affiliation of our entire being, cannot succeed. It is defeated at the very outset.

Doubt, despondent thoughts, discontent—these are terribly detrimental to any accomplishment. Discontent is a disease of the mind, just as doubt is, and they both produce unhappiness. Of course there is a discontent born from the desire to go forward, from a dissatisfaction with one's present state of ease and comfort. That is a different thing. But this discontent that arises no matter what is given to you or where you are placed, this constant feeling that you cannot be satisfied in any circumstance, is a great drawback to the soul. In short, from the practical point of view, there is only one way we can climb the ladder of life successfully, and that is by having a definite consciousness of our own being, of the purpose of our life, and of the significance of existence, ridding ourselves once for all of the idea that we go on in a haphazard way and that somehow or other we shall drag through to the end.

Remember it is the mind that creates. Let us therefore, have a lofty theme for the mind to carry. You may say, "I have already lived a good part of my life, so it is useless for me to attempt anything new." It is never useless, and it is never too late. If this mind has brought us disastrous results, the mind also has the power to bring us what is constructive, most beautiful and full of glory. It can connect us with all things high and holy, and it can make it impossible for us to gaze on those things or even approach them. We should take it as a fundamental principle that we ourselves are greatly responsible for our success and for our

failure. These are not ordained. They are not predestined, although on the surface it may seem so. It is true, some people are born with greater opportunities than others. Why is this? Why is one man victorious and another not? There is a reason, though we are not always able to dig down to it. We may not be able to find it in this life, but this little life is not all that there is, nor does it end everything. That idea is a very great fallacy and is the cause of all our bewilderment. We think everything is contained in this narrow sphere of existence, and naturally we lose our sense of values. Often a man has the suicidal tendency merely because he sees no way of acquiring immediately in this life something that he has set his heart upon, or because he has failed to satisfy his ambition.

Let us remember what I said in the beginning, that the key to true success is not ambition. Ambition is a very brittle quality. It never lays the foundation for greatness. It may teach a man to forge ahead for a while in the madness of self-glorification, but ultimately it crumbles into nothing. Ambitious people are seldom happy, and certainly we do not want a success which does not bring happiness and peace. An ambitious person may learn to be clever at cheating someone; he may learn the art of "putting something over" somebody else, but that type of market-value success has no substance. We outgrow it; we depart from it altogether. We come to cherish, to understand and follow what is abiding, and we do this not only for our own gratification, but that others in the world of life, our friends, those who look up to us, may learn from our radiance. One who in this way, through his conduct and habit of thinking, makes of himself a model for his fellows, he is the truly successful in this world. No longer is there any make-believe in his character: he has become the thing.

Life is really a question of being and becoming, and in order that we may become what we aspire to be, we have to let many things go. Know, however, that when you give up something ignoble, a greater thing will be awaiting you. That is the Law. But it is one thing to understand it ethically or intellectually, and quite another to put it into operation. Yet this putting into operation is the foundation for all success, all glory, all happiness, all peace. These are inter-related and by gaining them we find our way of access to the higher levels, and can no longer be satisfied with the lower aspects of life.

“Be diligent and faithful, patient and hopeful, one and all of you, and may we all know, at all times, that verily the Eternal rules above us and that nothing finally wrong has happened or can happen.” Therefore bind your heart with hope and courage. Remember that you can wipe out every wound, every mark that has been left, no matter how long ago, every sign of failure. Never doubt that you can do it. Begin now, and do not depend upon chance. It is a strange distortion of the human mind that it likes to wait for chance. There is no chance or anarchy in the cosmic universe. The measure of your success is not in the hands of another nor in the judgment of the world. It is in your own mind. You know better than anyone else can know how you are growing in your understanding, in your feeling, in your depth of vision; yet when someone comes and tells you how wonderful you are, you place all your hope in his words. We like to listen to the voice of the outer world. We depend upon it entirely too much. Instead, let us learn to rely on what is abiding and eternal, that all our fictitious sense of values, all our misgiving and discontent may vanish, and we shall find within our own soul real peace, happiness and a never-failing protection.

THE FOREVER FREE

By Epictetus

If neither honor nor judgment is destroyed, the man himself is preserved likewise; but when either of these is lost and demolished, he is lost also. In this do all great events consist.

Paris, they say, was undone because the Greeks invaded Troy and laid it waste, and his family were slain in battle. By no means; for no one is undone by an action not his own. All that was only laying waste the nests of storks. But his true undoing was when he lost the modest, the faithful, the hospitable, and the decent character.

When was Achilles undone? When Patroclus died? By no means. But when he gave himself up to a rage; when he wept over a girl; when he forgot that he came there, not to get mistresses, but to fight. This is human undoing, this is the siege, this the overthrow—when right principles are ruined and destroyed. . . .

What hinders one who has discerned these things from living with an easy and light heart, quietly awaiting whatever may happen, and enduring contentedly what has happened. Shall it be poverty? Bring it, and you shall see what poverty is when it has found one who can act well the poor man's part. Shall it be power? Bring toils, too, along with it. Banishment? Wherever I go it will be well with me there, for it was well with me here, not on account of the place, but of the principles which I shall carry with me, for no one can deprive me of these. On the contrary, they alone are my property, and cannot be taken away, and if I retain them I am content wherever I am or whatever I do.

"But it is now time to die."

Why do you say "to die?" Do not talk of the thing in a tragedy strain, but say, what is the truth, that it is time

for a compound piece of matter to be resolved again into its elements. And what is there in this that is dreadful? What part of the world is going to be lost? What is going to happen that is new or prodigious? Is it for this that a tyrant is formidable? Is it on this account that the swords of his guards seem so large and sharp? Try these things upon others. For my part, I have examined the whole. No one has any authority over me. God has made me free. I know His commands. After this no one can enslave me.

EL CAMINO REAL

By Mildred Phillips

A long, narrow road runs slowly along the southern half of California's coast line, as if leisurely enjoying its association with the deep blue waters of the Pacific. There is a lack of the haste that fills other places as, with quiet dignity, it tops this hill and descends that, now passing the summer home of some city captain of industry, and again the humble dwelling of an Indian sitting in the sun and dreaming of days long gone.

It is El Camino Real—the Thoroughfare Royal, or the King's Highway—following which we shall read the story of the one who first took its flaming trail, created by flinging mustard seeds to right and left, as he walked along more than a hundred and fifty years ago.

The old-time records of one Don Antonio Coronel refer to it as "the recognized highway of official travel," although it was not by any means a roadway, but was simply a series of irregular tracks. It had, however, a religious significance which gives it distinction among the roadways of the world. It was at once the thoroughfare of consecration and of rhapsody. To quote from George Wharton James, who has frequently followed its course, "From the beginning of its

real history, over this King's Highway, again and again, back and forth, happily or wearily according as his extensive plans prospered or dragged, walked the sainted Serra. Here he sang aloud, there he sank on his knees in prayer, yonder he wept in anguish as the news of some delay in his beloved work or some Indian outburst reached him.

"This road saw the coming of the colonists from Mexico, heard their openly expressed hopes, fears, expectations. As the years rolled on it heard the squeak and rattle of the lumbering *carreta*, as elderly Señoras rode accompanied by gay *caballeros* in zerape and sombrero, riding on saddles of price, carved in exquisite design and skilfully inlaid with silver. . . . Indeed to know the history of the Camino Real is to know the history of the California of those days."

But with the policy of secularization this was all changed. As one by one the Missions fell to ruin and the owls hooted through their belfries, El Camino Real lost its identifying characteristics and was nearly forgotten. Not completely, however. A few years ago Californians awoke to the beauty and romance of the fast-fading past—to the past of peaceful valleys and orchards smiling in the sun, of Missions set one day's journey apart, echoing now no longer to the busy steps of the bustling life within their walls, and El Camino Real was again explored and its winding length marked by tiny mission bells from San Diego to Sonoma.

The Russians were slowly making their way southward from Alaska along the coast, the English were taking the trail from New England to the west, the French were coming to the rich possessions of the Mississippi valley, and the Dutch burghers were slowly trekking from New Amsterdam, searching for a more substantial foothold in the New World. It looked as if the Spaniard must move northward in this checkerboard movement of the nations if he would not be

checkmated in his desire of seeing the red and yellow of Spain as triumphant as the tricolor of France or the dragon of England.

In the year 1768 the Jesuits had been driven out of the New World dominions of Spain and the Franciscans began to pour into Mexico to take their places. By the following year they had become fairly well established and were determined to succeed where the Jesuits had failed. The Franciscans were glad of this new opportunity and King Charles III of Spain was likewise glad, because he knew that if they worked to save the souls of the Indians, they would at the same time achieve the colonization of the country and add the land to the sum total of Spain's dominions.

It was the purpose of the king to explore the coast of California and as much of the interior as possible, although the extent of its seaboard had already been surveyed by Cabrillo, Farello and Viscaino. This royal purpose it fell to Don José de Galvez to carry into effect, and it was by his order that Junipero Serra, a Franciscan monk, was sent into Lower California to re-establish the former Jesuit missions there. Galvez soon followed him and they both agreed that early the following year forces should be dispatched both by land and by sea to take possession of California.

Now Serra, who was then fifty-five years old, had come out of Spain twenty years before, bound for the New World, thinking only of how he might save souls and serve Mother Church. He was deeply consecrated and was looked upon as a saint, only a little less in the scale than St. Francis of Assisi himself, the great founder of the Order. Years of unremitting zeal spent in the prosecution of his calling had wasted his naturally frail body, and in addition he had a painful ulcer on his leg, which had given him unending trouble since the time he had walked from Vera Cruz to

Mexico City to test his enthusiasm and earnestness as a soldier of God. These physical handicaps, however, proved no barrier to his fiery purpose which flamed anew at the thought of carrying the cross into the untried territory of California proper.

Although the government of Mexico had placed three ships at the disposal of Galvez, Serra elected to go with the land forces, which, a few days after the sailing of the ships, marched northward in two companies, one headed by Captain Rivera y Moncada, and the second under the command of Captain Gaspar de Portola, who had received the commission to go as the first governor of California. It was the plan that Serra should be in charge of this second company, but he was obliged to remain behind owing to the condition of his leg which he nursed with what patience he could. He soon insisted, however, on starting with two soldiers and a servant. After a short time his leg became so swollen and painful that he was again obliged to rest, but by dint of travelling one day and resting the following he finally overtook Portola just before he entered San Diego. Here he found that one of the three ships had been lost, but the two remaining were riding at anchor, and the land forces were already encamped.

The first progenitors of the famous flocks and herds, that one day were to cover the hills of California, were there, and one was killed as a thank-offering to God for His mercies. Serra began his work of saving the souls of the Indians the day of his arrival, and Portola added his share to the occasion by a great feast of beef that followed the celebration of mass.

Almost immediately afterward he set out with a company on foot in search of Monterey Bay which, however, entirely eluded him. The immense cross which Viscaino had erected

there so long ago, and which was in full view from the ocean, was not even glimpsed by him on this trip of discovery.

While he was engaged in this fruitless search, Serra, getting his facilities well in hand, dedicated his first Mission, San Diego de Alcala, which has stood for over one hundred and fifty years, a monument to a zeal which builded strong and well. A little to one side it stands, dreaming away the years and gradually falling into ruin.

The partakers of Portola's bounty on that first day of feasting soon forgot their gratitude, for scarcely had sufficient timbers been put together to shelter Father Serra and his little band when the Indians attacked the Spaniards and the latter escaped massacre only by their wits.

Portola, having signally failed to find Monterey Bay, went farther in his search, until at last he reached the bay of San Francisco. He was sure that it was the harbor found by the earlier Spaniards and named by them San Francisco, and it was so he redesignated it. He returned to San Diego, however, thoroughly disheartened, believing that the bay of Monterey did not exist.

During the time that he was in the north, the *San Antonio* had been sent back to Mexico for supplies and reinforcements, and was still away. Portola, utterly discouraged, did not have faith to believe that it would ever return. Provisions were running low and it was only the pleadings and prayers of Father Serra that prevented him from setting sail at once for home. If the plan of the Spaniards had been abandoned there is no doubt that the development of California would have been retarded for many years, perhaps a century. Today, those who sit in California's sunshine, who enjoy her luscious fruits and her proverbially sunny skies should be grateful to the faith and fervor of

this frail monk who though wracked by bodily aches and pains, weakened by illness and starvation, yet had too strong a will and too inspired a vision either to give up himself or to let Portola give up.

Finally Portola, yielding to Father Serra's prayers and pleadings, consented to wait until March 19th. The day arrived and orders were given to his ragged, unkempt soldiers, weak from want of food, to embark immediately for Mexico. They made ready with joy and the noise and the stir of preparation brought a sinking heart to Father Serra and seemed almost to chill the faith of that indomitable leader. Could it be that that flame of faith had been lighted within his soul for no purpose? As he listened to the shouts of the soldiers, he knew that he could never go back with them. No, he would remain behind—to die if need be—a lonely figure on an alien shore, rather than turn his back on his life's purpose. An agonized prayer arose from the depths of his being, and even as he prayed and while the men leaped forward at Don Gaspar's word, the relief ship, *San Antonio*, sailed into the harbor.

The immediate crisis having been passed, Portola set about organizing another expedition to search for Monterey Bay, this time by sea. With Father Serra as his companion, he again turned his face to the north and almost immediately attained his goal: they sailed into Monterey Bay with Vizcaino's great cross in front of and above them.

On the morning of June 3rd, 1770, they gathered together—Father Serra, Don Gaspar de Portola, a number of priests, many soldiers and officers, and some Indian muleteers. The Spanish cavaliers knelt in all the bravery of scarlet coats and breeches, lace and knee buckles, and with bowed heads were blessed by Father Serra, as the land was consecrated by him.

So was sanctified San Carlos de Monterey, the second Mission in the long chain, later to be connected like pearls on a thread by El Camino Real.

In those days when there were so few means of communication, it was surprising how swiftly the word of events travelled. In Edwin Markham's "California the Wonderful," we read:

"The news of these achievements on the coast of the North Pacific went flying back to the viceroy and the king. All Spain was soon in a blaze of excitement! At last their northern lands were to be peopled with the children of the Church. Cathedral bells rejoiced through the night; rockets soared to the stars; guns thundered to the hills. Ladies vied with one another in flinging into the melting pots their gold and silver ornaments to be molded into bells for far-off Mission towers."

Barracks were built here for the soldiers, and inside the walls were constructed the quarters for the Governor and his staff, making Monterey the first capital.

Father Serra in making his reports to the College of San Fernando in Mexico wrote long letters descriptive of the beautiful and fertile country, and asked for funds and for one hundred missionaries. Thirty were dispatched immediately.

Monterey, Father Serra finally decided, was not a suitable place for a Mission, owing to the lack of water, and of acreage adaptable for tilling. He soon discovered a few miles farther south a lovely valley by a river, not far from the ocean, where the waves washed over a point of land, and where there were hundreds of acres fit for cultivation, and a lake of fresh water. To the church, garrison and living quarters which he had built there soon afterward, he gave the name of Mission de San Carlos del Rio Carmel,

known briefly as Carmel. It became the head Mission of the long chain and was peculiarly dear to Father Serra's heart. Today it is his last resting place.

His enthusiasm was communicated to the officials of Mexico City, and on receipt of news of the ceremony on the shore of the bay of Monterey, the bells of the cathedral, and of all the smaller churches, were rung. But still he sought a situation for another Mission.

Two years before, when Portola and his band were wearily crossing the mountains of the Santa Lucia range, one of the number, Father Crespi, to whose diary we are so much indebted, had seen from the summit a beautiful and fertile valley which they had afterward crossed. When word was received from Mexico that the new missionaries were ready to start, Father Crespi, remembering this valley, told Father Serra, who at once shared his enthusiasm. That intrepid soul, mounting a mule and accompanied by two priests and a small retinue of soldiers, started at once for the spot, a few miles south of Monterey. When he beheld the land waving with the blue-green of wild oats and teeming with all kinds of wild fruit, he danced about all unmindful of his painful and now always swollen leg, and pulled the ropes to ring the bells, calling out, "Come all ye gentiles! Come to Holy Church!"

Who can tell now, or could then for that matter, what visions filled his mind, enraptured as always at the thought of the souls to be saved, and perhaps Indians by the thousands as a bright and particular jewel for his crown?

This Mission, when it was established, was called San Antonio de Padua, and was one of the most picturesque of the Missions, and stands out as the richest.

The founding of San Gabriel came next, then Father Serra went to Mexico. His personal representations availed

where his written word had failed. And after nearly dying of fever, he accomplished his purpose and more missionaries and money were forthcoming.

Then arose in quick succession San Luis Obispo, San Juan de Capistrano, San Francisco de Assisi, Santa Clara, San Buenaventura, Santa Barbara, La Purissima, Santa Cruz, Soledad, San Jose, San Juan Bautista, San Miguel, San Fernando, San Luis Rey and Santa Inez.

Of the San Gabriel Mission, even as late as 1831, the following description is given us by one Orange Clarke who transcribes the account of his friend, George C. Yount, a pioneer of the west, who with his companion, William Wolfskill and an accompanying party, came down at that time through the famous Cajon Pass into the fertile lands of Southern California. It shows us that even at this date Father Serra's benign influence was still living and vibrant. Having wandered for weeks, lost in the snowbound mountain ranges of the south-west, this gracious country must have seemed to these wanderers like a paradise, while the Mission with its towers and gardens, its teeming life and air of prosperity filled them with amazement. "The establishment," writes Clark, "was on a scale of immense magnitude and grandeur, and there was a profusion of wealth and magnificence which would do honor to any noble of Castile or Arragon.

"Yount and Wolfskill felt an irrepressible curiosity to visit the Mission and its venerable Father; but totally ignorant of the spirit and customs of the country and of those establishments, they were embarrassed with a thousand misgivings. They, however, dismissed their misgivings and called at the mansion. To their no little surprise they met a most cordial reception. They found the Holy Father bland, meek and accessible and all the comforts of the estab-

lishment thrown freely open to their enjoyment. Apartments neat, clean and sumptuous were allotted to them, and they were fed richly, and attended like guests of distinction and renown.

"Vespers and matins were daily had before the door of the priest's residence, and the roll of several hundreds of the Indians was daily called, all of whom were well clothed and fed. That priest had at the time of Yount's arrival more than two millions of dollars in his coffers, which were strong, rude oaken chests, and one hundred and thirty thousand head of cattle, besides horses, hogs, goats and fowls and poultry of every kind.

"It was interesting to observe the perfect neatness and cleanliness which marked the establishment throughout its every department and nothing could exceed the order and system maintained everywhere and in minute detail. The priest was the father, patriarch and lord supreme of the immense family. His spirit was everywhere and pervaded everything. He was a man of the highest order of talents, and withal so bland, so gentle, so affectionate and paternal he gave dignity to everything. His wishes were the all-pervading law which no one would violate. Even the most minute want of everyone was attended to in detail, and cheerful complacency seemed to smile everywhere. No harsh or supercilious word or look was heard or exhibited. Every department of the establishment bore the impress of his very enlarged and comprehensive mind. Not only were his manors largely stocked, but his vineyards, orchards and gardens alike planted not merely for the present but also for future generations to enjoy. Tropical fruits and the productions of every clime were there and in rich profusion. He raised the finest wheat, and mills for grinding it were to be seen on various parts of the ranch.

"The hunters in their leather apparel, moccasins and strange accoutrements, were of course a great curiosity there, and the Indians so civilized were hardly less a wonder to the trappers. Wild Redmen of the woods the trappers had known full well enough, but these same human beings, brought under salutary rules of living well, educated and civilized, they had never known."

What Yount was not aware of was that at times, under some of the padres at least, the Indians rebelled against work, and at times there was rioting against the soldiers, who themselves incited the very acts of lawlessness they were supposed to prevent.

There were no hotels in this new land, so the Missions served as hostelry for the passing wayfarers and for the settlers who came in ever-increasing numbers. Always there was a welcome for them and when they were ready to depart they found in their rooms a small dish of Spanish coins to take away with them.

The picture of San Gabriel Mission was in truth a typical picture, even of the earlier days. The orange groves with their deep yellow fruit, the olive trees shimmering in the sun, and the white Mission buildings, covered with red Castilian roses, made a sight fair to see. Surely in the eyes of Father Serra it must have seemed the fulfilling of his dream, the blessing from a Divine hand. Yet the growing wealth of the Missions never caused him to relax his vigil or abandon his austere simplicity. Old and lame and feeble, his heart flamed with the old-time faith and fervor, and with undaunted courage he still admonished and prayed for the work and those under his care.

He spent his days travelling on foot from one mission to another, and it is said of him that he covered the entire distance from Carmel to San Diego—nearly five hundred

miles—no less than nine times. In fact he had just returned from one of these long journeys when he received the call to go forth on the last longest journey of all. He would rest a little, he told them, and inwardly prepared, he lay down to sleep. When next they looked in on him, they found that his sleep had become the sleep of death. This was August 28th, 1784, at his ever loved Carmel. He died when he was seventy-one years old, after having been President-Father of the Missions for fifteen years.

His going touched every life, even the humblest, with poignant sorrow and a sense of irreparable loss. The sailors begged the sandals from his feet, in the faith that they would serve as an amulet against disasters on the sea, and as for the Indians whom he had guarded so faithfully, they pleaded for bits of his worn brown cassock or for hairs from his head. Perhaps they sensed that without him, life at the Missions would never be the same again. For he had loved the Indians truly and was conscious only of their souls which he saw as reflections of his own inner radiance. Always his illumined presence counteracted the discipline and burden of labor that undoubtedly was their portion. When this gentle influence was withdrawn, they gradually went down under the frequently stern rule of the padres; also, while still under their direction, they were reduced seventy-five percent by smallpox, and from this loss they never recovered.

Eventually the priests, through secularization, in 1830, lost their power in the land and their authority over the Indians, who quickly sank back into their original state, once the guiding hand was withdrawn. Under the direction of the Spanish, they had proved themselves able craftsmen, but years of dependence had robbed them of their initiative, so that their last state intensified by plague, starvation, and

the loss of all they had called their own, was worse than their first had been.

Today only the memory persists of the ancient glory of the Missions. It is true in some of the Mission churches Services are held for the faithful. It is true that Santa Barbara Mission is still an active monastery with its walls and towers intact, but its sisters, for the most part, lie in ruins along El Camino Real—gracious ruins, bearing witness to an epoch, colorful and bright, whose fragrance yet pervades the byways of California. Should Father Serra come back now, however, and view the wreckage of his dream, he might well break his heart over what he would feel was his failure; and the average man, surveying the remains of his labors, would undoubtedly see in them proof of the futility of human effort.

Was Father Serra's work a failure? The same question could be asked concerning the mission of Christ, or of St. Francis. It may be asked of all those whose immediate efforts seem to fail, but whose lives are a triumph. Father Serra's life was a triumph—a triumph of faith, of love, of unshakable courage. He thought that the mandate which sent him forth into California was to convert the Indians. This difficult task was indeed the touchstone which proved the gold of his spirit; but the real mandate which he unconsciously answered called on him merely to be. The Missions which he builded may lie in dust along the way, his Indian neophytes may have vanished but the light of what he was shines down through the years to irradiate the hearts of millions yet unborn. He has become, as it were, the patron saint of California, and none can measure his influence. So it is always with holy lives, the victory they achieve by their being makes "that which the world is pleased to call success seem but the pity of the gods."

El Camino Real is now a concrete roadway traversed by thousands of motorists, and there are among them dreamers who with the eye of imagination see a lonely monk in the brown cassock of the Franciscans plodding along, his face bright with loving earnestness, and in his eyes the vision of a future yet to be.

AT SERRA'S GRAVE

By George Sterling

(An excerpt from the poem)

O heart,
Flaming audacious heart, so long in dust!
'Twas thy reward to die, ere died thy works—
To perish ere the vision too was fled.
The vineyard and the orchard and the fold
Have passed—and passed as well that other flock,
Thy tenderest concern, O Spirit pure,
Who in an age of infamy and gold
Saw souls alone.

Benevolence is the most honorable dignity conferred by Heaven, and the quiet home in which a man should dwell; and righteousness is his straight path.

To dwell in love, the wide house of the world; to stand in propriety, the correct seat of the world; and to walk in righteousness, the great path of the world; when he obtains his office to practise his principles for the good of the people, and when his desire for office is disappointed, to practise them alone; to be above the power of riches and honors to make dissipated, of poverty and mean conditions to make swerve from the right, of might and force to bend: these are the traits of the noble man.

—Mencius.

THE SEVEN CHARIOTS

From the Gospel of the White Lotus

Fold the palms of your hands together,
Let body and mind repose,
Then you will quickly attain rest,
And receive a portion of God's Law.
Your heart will become as peaceful as a lake,
Perfectly straightforward, guileless.
When your mind is made up,
Then in a moment, by repentance
All is done!

For all one's past and present efforts
And study of God's works—
All lead back to God. . . .

There is but one Gate,—
There is a great Power
Working for peace and uprightness;
And for this end there are
Seven great and precious chariots,
Infinite in their dimensions.

One must empty his heart to receive each one.

The first is: Great mercy and tenderness;
The second: Untiring perseverance;
The third: Ever seeking good;
The fourth: Benefitting others;
The fifth: Immeasurable gifts;
The sixth: Rest and joy;
The seventh: By this religion one is rid
of all sorrow in the three realms. . . .

Mounting these precious chariots,
Make straight for the place
Where true religion is taught.

REPORT

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

VEDANTA CENTRE OF BOSTON

The windows of the Vedanta Centre of Boston overlooking the beautiful Fenway park, with the Christ-child altar and special decoration, made many a passer-by pause and gaze in wonderment. The Service was held at six o'clock during which violin music rendered by Mr. Einar Hansen and his son, Harald, and 'cello by Miss Florence Colby, added in great measure to the occasion. Srimtai Gayatri Devi with her devout spirit interpreted the significance of the birth of the Holy Child.

ANANDA-ASHRAMA OF CALIFORNIA

As the Boston Service closed, in far-away California, at the Ananda-Ashrama, the chimes sounded at four o'clock in the afternoon to gather all the eager and earnest worshippers into the Temple of the Universal Spirit, which breathed an atmosphere of rare beauty and sanctity, with its many candles and vigil lights, and the niches with artistic inscriptions symbolizing the spirit of all the great religions of the world. From every nook and corner there seemed to be resounding a joyous echo for the occasion, and as Swami Paramananda with a few salient sentences described it: "Christmas Eve celebration is not to preach sermons but to express our inmost feelings in joyous recognition through the songs of our heart that the Holy Spirit is born again and that tenderness which never fails to conquer the hardness of the world will again conquer all the harshness and sordidness and make our hearts glad." Rare music sounded in the Temple as two distinguished musicians, a baritone and his wife, contributed familiar Christmas carols. The "Holy Night" never sounded more beautiful. The festive spirit

filled the library where tea was served by the friends and members of the Ashrama. It was literally crowded with humanity and "Merry Christmas" was most evident, as the happy voices exchanged their season's greetings.

NEW YEAR'S EVE IN BOSTON

Swami Paramananda, after a strenuous and eventful month at the California Ashrama, returned hastily in time to observe the New Year's Eve Midnight Service at the Chapel of the Vedanta Centre of Boston. The auditorium was filled with eager expectant listeners who wanted to begin the year right. The Swami laid great emphasis on the fact that we must not bid farewell to the old year with grudge in our heart, but rather to draw from it the blessings which it has brought us instead of the hardships, heartaches and depression. "Has it not in many instances made people think, has it not many times through its pressures turned our gaze towards God for divine help and if it has brought us a little closer to higher realities we must bless it." Then with deep feeling, the Swami called the members of the congregation to enter the New Year, not with boisterous expectancy of a good time, but with silence and prayer that no matter what may await us we may be equal to every task and if we are conscious that a mighty spirit guides our steps and watches over us then we cannot fail at any time. Exactly at midnight hour all the bright lights were put out and the Chapel glowed with soft vigil lights and candles, and in the hush of silence and spirit of sanctity, the Swami recited his poem, so appropriate to the occasion, "Children of Light, walk in the Light, Let all darkness vanish from your path." The whole congregation repeated this and it created an atmosphere of strength and surety that there cannot be any ill or danger for the "Children of Light."

At the conclusion of the Service, the Swami stood by the

fireplace in the Library and greeted the congregation personally, wishing them a Happy New Year while the refreshments were being served.

NEW YEARS'S EVE AT ANANDA-ASHRAMA, CALIFORNIA

Owing to the difference of three hours in time, Swami Paramananda was able to send a message of greeting to those in California who were disappointed that he could not celebrate the New Year's Eve with them. It was a happy surprise as it arrived in the midst of their Service in the Temple. It is a beautiful experience to gather on the Ashrama hilltop to begin the New Year in silence and prayer in this "Nature's Sanctuary." The Service was conducted by Sister Daya and with her devout spirit she enkindled their hearts for new resolution to live worthily for each one's ideal.

SAN DIEGO LECTURES

On December fifteenth, Swami Paramananda was invited to speak to a devoted group in San Diego and his message was received with warm response. For several years past a very loyal group of people have made their regular pilgrimage to Ananda-Ashrama, La Crescenta, motoring a distance of over one hundred and fifty miles each way in order to attend the Swami's lectures and classes. Their earnestness has created a strong nucleus and it is hoped that on the Swami's return from the East he will give regular weekly lectures in San Diego.

IMPORTANT

May we request all our kind readers to please renew their subscriptions to the MESSAGE OF THE EAST and if possible secure one or more additional subscriptions for its twenty-first year's activity. Please send all subscriptions to the Vedanta Centre, 32 Fenway, Boston, Mass.

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Message of the East

GIFT
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Renew Thyself

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Message of the East

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."

—*Ezekiel*

"Light shall come again from the East."

—*Tyndall*

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RENEW THYSELF

By *Swami Paramananda*

(An Address delivered at the Vedanta Centre of Boston, July 27th, 1930.)



HERE is an innate longing in the hearts of men to be preserved, to be protected, and even those who find themselves hurt or damaged hope fervently that there may be some miracle to renew them.

This is not merely a religious sentiment. It enters into the very heart of humanity. Medical science has ever striven to find newer and newer means to save human bodies from deterioration while philosophy, psychology and religion have their share in dreaming the dreams by which man's immortal nature can be revealed and thus in some measure restore even the garb he wears. This morning as I am thinking on the theme on which I am about to speak, "Renew Thyself," my great desire is to bring its meaning, its practical application in such a manner that it can be of great and definite help to everyone of us. Is it legitimate for a man to pray to be preserved or to be remade? Or is this not a prayer of selfish nature? This is the first question that arises in our mind. The answer is that the whole thing depends upon our motive and it is seldom that we find our prayers answered when our motive is selfish and impure.

The only way we can hope to have a renewal of body and mind is when we find our definite access into the source of life itself, pure and unadulterated, and if this we gain as a

result of our prayer, meditation and spiritual reflection, a definite form of renewal takes place even in the outer body. Just on the same principle as a person feels refreshed after he has taken a bath even though he may have spent a whole night in anguish, suffering and sleeplessness. So when we do find our point of contact with the source of existence we draw according to our capacity to draw from that source and we are made new and refreshed.

It is not the man who is merely anxious to gain things for himself that finds this fulfillment. It is rather one who gives himself whole-heartedly to the quest of truth and even though he may disregard the physical his whole life is blessed.

Solomon, we are told, preferred wisdom before all the scepters and the powers of men. There was a yearning in his soul to find wisdom—a hunger and a thirst. He had no thought for anything else. Yet when he had attained wisdom, all other things came with it. May not the same be true for us? If we seek first that which is first, will not our lesser needs likewise be fulfilled?

The impatient man at once says, "I cannot follow this roundabout way. I would rather receive immediately what I have immediate need of. Give me this—give me that—grant me health, wealth, prosperity—*now!*" Thus he is content to ask for the crumbs of life. In the light of wisdom he is the loser, for when we seek the temporal, we receive only the temporal.

"That Self, that immortal Spirit, is a bank, a boundary.

He who has crossed that bank, if blind, ceases to be blind; if wounded, ceases to be wounded; if afflicted, ceases to be afflicted."

This tremendous thought, contained in the Upanishads, comes upon us as a lightning flash. It comes down to us from a very ancient time. History fails to give us the date when

it was conceived, because it is of the spiritual realm. When we dwell with the Spirit, the Truth, the Absolute One, time, space, causation and all the boundary lines melt away. What a wonderful thing when a man can abide in this consciousness. To close one's eyes and try to do so, however, is one thing; to enter into it is another. So long as we are filled with personal desires, there is no room for the Divine Influx. It comes with surrender, and this surrender sometimes is brought about by the pressure of life itself. Often it has been the cause of remarkable healing. There have been cases where a man has been desperately ill. He has struggled and struggled to regain his health, till, tired of physicians and specialists of every kind, there has come a moment when, through sheer exhaustion, he gives up. He becomes like a child. He says, "I am helpless. I can do nothing for myself." In that lull something new is born. It may be that he has awakened his soul-consciousness, or perhaps what we call a miracle has taken place, but all pain of body and sickness of soul disappear completely and the man is reborn, renewed. Renewed is the very word.

"Tell us how we may do the same thing," you ask; and I must reply, "Can you forget yourself?" Many times people have questioned me regarding what they call my secret for preserving youth. I remember one very pointed question asked me by a lady, after I returned from India in 1912. When I went to India I shaved my head and it gave me a very youthful appearance. This lady saw me after an interval of a few years. She said, "You look at least ten or fifteen years younger." She was so earnest, like a drowning person. She caught hold of my hand, "Tell me your secret!" she exclaimed. "You can make a fortune if you will teach people how not to show the signs of age!" I caused her great disappointment. It was my simple answer

which did not answer her. She thought I would give her a chant or mantram and say, "Hold your nose!" or, "Concentrate on your toe!" There are those who give such practices, but I was blessed with a glimpse of the Higher at the outset of my spiritual life, so I cannot confuse the spiritual with the material. I told her, "The only secret I can give is an open secret: Do not fill your mind with worries about yourself. Rather fill your mind with thoughts of constructive work, selfless service and thus create a rhythm within yourself by trusting more and more in the Higher Power who always guides our destiny." This did not satisfy her. Becoming anxious about ourself, what we should do, what we should eat, where we should live, these thoughts of chaotic disorder break down all our reserve and natural resistance. The secret is to preserve a child-like trust and unalloyed faith in the Divine Principle.

What I told her was the very foundation principle in the practical province of self-preservation. Yet she thought, "Why doesn't the Swami give me something practical?" Here is my answer: Every form of science has its method. If you want to study chemistry, you must approach it in a certain way and according to a certain process; if you are going to follow the spiritual path then you must cultivate the spiritual sense, and the first step toward it is to get rid of the attachments you have made—the burdens of selfishness, worry, care, anger, envy—the petty thoughts and feelings you have accumulated. These thoughts and feelings we have imposed upon ourselves and it is because of them that we are suffering. Let us turn our eyes away from them and look at another picture—the picture of the true Self—the Immortal. Old age does not touch it, no affliction can come near it—the perfect Image, the Beautiful, the Unalterable One!

How far are we removed from that Image today? When you look in the mirror of life or in the mirror that you have on your dressing-table, what face do you see? How often do you behold a countenance that is benign, composed, that gives you a glimpse of your true Divine Entity? It is not that you never see it. There are days when it is as if your face were bathed in dewdrops, a beaming intelligence shines forth from your eyes, a living radiance animates your whole being; but mostly you are disturbed, worried, torn by outside things. You say, "That cannot be helped; that is unavoidable." The fact is outside things should not have any influence upon us. Let me give you an illustration of what I mean: You are feeling poised, strong, perhaps you are smiling, when suddenly an insult, a cutting word spoken in anger, or the news of some loss, strikes upon your mind, and at once it becomes agitated, and all your peace is gone. A thing which did not exist for you a moment before not only exists now but has assumed such proportions that you are overwhelmed by it. One who walks in the light of wisdom, however, minimizes these dangers and is less and less touched by these onslaughts.

The mind can be made like a lotus leaf, so absolutely polished that it absorbs nothing. Water falls on the lotus leaf but rolls right off again. Man's mind can be so polished with the thoughts of truth, beauty and detachment from all terrestrial things that these roll right off him. He is protected—preserved. That is why every genuine yogi or mystic carries an atmosphere of childlike serenity. I have never met any truly spiritual person—that is, not one who is merely pretending, or self-appointed, but really spiritual—who did not possess this quality. In him, the world aspect of life is asleep.

"That which is night to all beings, therein the self-sub-

jugated remains awake; and in that where all beings are awake, that is night for the knower of Self." There he would rather sleep and rest; he lives in another atmosphere.

Do not imagine my friends, that by dwelling on the body you can preserve the body. You may reply, "Whatever we think upon, we become." That is true. If we think on material things, we become material, if on the temporal, we become of temporal consciousness. Therefore in order to become immortal, we must dwell upon immortal thoughts and then relate them to the mortal. This is the secret of self-preservation, of the renewing of oneself. Every morning, just as you renew your garments and refresh your body, you have the power to renew your being by means of your spiritual essence.

Some people think physical strength will defy everything—break down heavy walls, but ultimately it breaks down the one who uses it. In India there is a legend of a great king named Ravanna, a mighty demon king, who was ruthless in his power. Anything he desired he took by force. He stole the very treasures from heaven. He thought that he had attained physical immortality; but in the end he was overthrown by Rama, the Divine Incarnation. This may be only a story, but even a story written by man has some relationship with inherent truth.

Flesh is not preserved by the thought of flesh, but flesh may be preserved by the thought of Spirit. In fact the most remarkable cures have been performed where there has been no thought of the body at all or of its healing, but only a concentration upon a mind picture, a focusing of the thought upon That which is beyond the flesh. Sometimes people, not knowing, have attained healing this way, unconsciously. But even if they do not know, the Divine knows. I doubt if anybody went to Christ and asked the scientific means by

which He accomplished His healing. I doubt if He would have told them if they had. He probably would have remained silent. Silence is in itself a speech.

There is no one among us who has not the power of self-renewal. The trouble is we approach these things from a mechanical standpoint. We have learned from the books and Bibles that every day we should pray. We may pray by the hour and still we find nothing. You know how it is when you go to hear a singer. One man may sing a song and you feel exalted, another, with perhaps a more beautiful voice, sings the same song and you feel like leaving the place. It is not what we do but how we do it that counts—the calmness, the feeling, the understanding we manifest.

We must make a contact with our Source. As long as a tree is connected with its root it will survive anything—storm, wind, devastation. Same way, the man of Spirit, the silent man of realization, feels that he is held by the root of his being. The Divine Power is his protection. For him this thought is not a theory or an experiment—he realizes it in his own depths. When such a man wakes in the morning what does he do? First thing of all, he seeks to feel his connection with that Power. Instead of thinking about what he is going to eat, how he is going to deal with his problems, or the small ambitions of daily life, his mind goes to the Source. He does not ask, “Lord, give me health, wealth, make me powerful!” He turns to the One from whom all these things come.

How do you account for it that the greatest men, those whom we regard as saints, prophets, men of genius, ask for nothing? They do not want anything for themselves, yet the whole world lays its homage at their feet.

At once you exclaim, “If that is the case I will not ask for anything!” But such a resolve is only on the surface;

in the heart there is ambition. You say, "I will not think of the body." Try, and see how well you can succeed. If you succeed you will reap the result, just as in physical science, it will come unfailingly. Put it to the test; many have done so. Think in the rhythm of life and all troubles will drop away from you. Try to renew yourself in this way. Have consecrated thoughts, forget that you are grown up. It may be a very difficult thing to do, but I ask you to do it. The great saints are all children. They do not want honor or recognition. Sri Ramakrishna, one of the glorious personages of modern India, if anyone called him "Teacher," he would say, "Who is Guru? Who is Master? Only One. The Lord alone is the real Guru and Master." He could not bear any egotistic relationships. He was always the child.

How like Christ it was! He preferred just to have playmates. Many will think that it was a madman's fancy. Why did he not take what was offered,—homage, gifts, worship? It is as true as I am standing here that he shrank from all these things. Someone brought him a beautiful Indian shawl, saying, "Do accept it, just to please me!" and because of his tender heart he took it. In the evening he put it on and went for his meditation. His nephew, noticing it was dragging in the dust, drew his attention to it, at which he took it off and threw it away, crying, "Anything that takes my mind from my Mother Divine cannot be good!"

If a man attains greatness and keeps his soul intact, he becomes the very smile of Heaven. Do not think that this can be acquired by accident. There are plenty who are seeking to imitate it. Like actresses, they may try to assume a smile no matter how they feel. They may deceive some people. Perhaps they may deceive me, because I believe in everybody. But the thing is, can they wear a mask before their own mind? Even the greatest of actors when the play is over takes off his

mask and has to look at his own face. Anyone who thinks constantly, "Are they going to criticize or applaud me?" becomes the slave of public opinion. We must be genuine through and through and learn to offer everything to One alone. As we practise this faithfully, we shall come gradually to that consciousness and understanding where, looking into the true mirror of life, every day we shall see our face shining with the radiance of Heaven. That which abides in us is striving to radiate through us, but we do not let it, we block its course. Just as easily, however, we can allow it to shine.

Mind alone is the cause of bondage and mind also is the cause of freedom. The great Upanishads tell us this. Man's upward course and his downward course both depend upon mind. His mind is his friend and can become his foe. We want, but we do not know what to want. We must train ourselves to want the Highest, and we shall never know how to do this till we have learned to surrender ourselves completely, till we have learned to say from the heart, "Thy Will be done! I am willing to do Thy Will."

Supreme Being never yields anything that is not good for us; but man with his small feelings and doubting mind cannot imagine that without asking for the best he will receive the best. Be spiritual! Be purified and cleansed and see what will come to you! Get rid of harrowing thoughts. If people bring to you gossip, scandal, if they create a wrong atmosphere, do not have anything to do with such people. These words may sound harsh, coming from one whom you have always regarded as gentle. Remember, however, you benefit a person when you discourage him from spreading these evil reports. When you listen to them, you contaminate your own mind and consciousness, you cripple yourself; that person is already crippled. Preserve yourself first;

charity will begin later. Seek to grow in the Image of the Absolute. If you hold constantly in your heart and mind a picture of the most beautiful, the most lovely, the most pure, you will become like unto it; that is, if you do not merely vaguely dream about these things, forgetting that thought and action must co-operate. There is no inspiration that man cannot put into practical application, but if he has not the background of thought, his action will not be successful.

Let us be sincere. We cannot desire this and that and find life's fulfillment. Rather it is by giving up that we find the fulfillment of everything. The wise men, the consecrated souls, the master-spirits of the world, think nothing of name and fame and public recognition; and because of that they stand on life's highest pinnacle.

Do not go away with the idea that I am giving you too many abstract thoughts. I am giving you the simple and practical key to life and to self-renewal. Think more of That from which you are descended and less of that which you want to preserve and you will see what magic will take place.

Let us be renewed. Let us begin afresh with reconsecrated ideals. What good does it do for a man to brood over his sins and past defects and all the blunders he has made? The only result will be that he will commit more. Rather let us lift ourselves to the stars: they will guide our destiny. Take that as symbolic. Look upon the perfect, the Absolute Being, and all imperfections, all limitations will fade, will vanish just as the fog, the mist, the darkness, vanish before the rays of the sun.

Let us look to the sun as the life-giver, the source of all blessing. Even the birds and beasts respond to the call of peace at dawn. Should we not, therefore, open ourselves

to the radiant Sun of Truth that He may preserve us? Yet what use is it merely to be preserved? No real person wants to live just for the fact of living. He wants to expand, to grow, to do something vital and constructive.

Do not be afraid of giving. Suppose you find some wonderful treasure; do not say, "I am going to keep this and use it for myself." Be generous—give it to others. Far more will come to you. Wisdom, bounty, love will flood your whole being. "First seek ye the Kingdom of God!" Seek the Kingdom of beauty, of holiness, of Truth, and all desires for the lesser petty things will fade away before the light of that great Effulgence.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Hail unto Thee, Atar, son of Ahura Mazda! Give me, O Atar, fullness of life; knowledge, sagacity, holiness of soul, and the understanding that groweth ever and is not acquired through learning; and manly courage, firm-footed, unsleeping, quick to rise up from bed, ever awake.

—*Atash Myayish.*

He can give whatever you ask for; for countless gems, O mind, lie strewn about the portals of His abode—He, the wishing-stone, that confers boons at the mere thought.

—*Kamalākanta.*

If wrinkles must be written upon our brows, let them not be written upon the heart. The spirit should not grow old.

James A. Garfield.

Keep your minds so filled with Truth and Love that sin, disease and death can not enter them. It is plain that nothing can be added to the mind already full. There is no door through which evil can enter.

—*Mary Baker Eddy.*

LET THERE BE LIGHT

By Sister Daya

One day as I sat gazing across a mountain valley, brimming with a violet haze which drenched in its color trees and homes and the shimmering hills beyond, I caught myself looking for the whole scene to waver in its form like a wind-blown scarf, changing protean-wise at every breath, or else to fade away utterly, absorbed by the fathomless blue, as though it were the dream of some sleeping god.

Idly I stooped and picked up a strone that lay at my feet. Its cold form pressed upon my palm; I was conscious of its weight and density. Yet I knew that of just such stones was formed the picture before me, and it was not in the least of the stuff that dreams are made of. But was it? The vagrant lines of a half-forgotten poem challenged me abruptly, and gradually assumed sequence in my mind.

"The pebble has a curious will
That in my hand doth lie.
It seems as motionless and still
As the zenith in the sky.

It seems to make not any sound.
It does not hum nor sing.
It keeps a helpless simple round
Yet is a fearful thing.

Its molecules weave in and out,
They leap, they plunge, they dive.
Up from dark gulfs they whirl about
As if they were alive.

They live, they dance, they burn, they die,
Their Judgment Days draw on apace!
Between their smallest atoms lie
Oceans of darkest space. . . .

It does not burst, it does not shake,
Nor fly dispersed in grains of sand.
Its shape is folded over it,
Like a Divine great hand. . . .

This earth, it is not as it seems.
It is the strangest place!
Once did I run on solid stones,
But now I trod on space."

Could this modern rhapsody be true and the stone only a seeming? What then held it inviolate to challenge the years? Where lay the secret of its mystery? Of its being? Of all being? Fascinated I peered at its dark surface. Surely science, thoughtful, unemotional, exact, would reinstate it in all its ancient solidity. But would it? Sentences from the scientific book I had been reading, when the sudden lifting of my eyes to the hills had plunged me into vision, floated into my mind. They invoked a picture of a mirage world—a world whose infinite variety, arising from its manifold differing elements, had been brought into being, as it were, out of one substance, one base, as if by the waving of a magic wand by some cosmic magician. From the One, many! This was no new thought, but the names were new and the scientific formulae.

Atoms, electrons, protons glowed and danced before my bewildered inward eye, till finally even these melted away and were caught up into waves of light—an infinitude of light—everywhere light, flowering into worlds and systems!

I turned to my book again and read:

“The tendency of modern physics is to resolve the whole material universe into waves and nothing but waves. The waves are of two kinds: bottled up waves which we call matter and unbottled waves which we call radiation or light. If annihilation of matter occurs, the process is merely that of unbottling imprisoned wave-energy and setting it free to travel through space. These concepts reduce the whole universe to a world of light, potential or existent, so that the whole story of its creation can be told with perfect accuracy and completeness in the six words: ‘God said let there be light’.”

Thus Sir James Jeans on modern science. Thus the universe, so far as science can see it. And how far can science

see? May not the light be but another veil? Science admits that it is. It speaks of striving to penetrate this covering of light in order to get at the nucleus of the atom, the very heart of matter, and the modern world awaits this disrobing with deep curiosity and much practical calculation as to the power which may be released.

Not so was it regarded in ancient India. For India also sought and still seeks, though by other means, to piece this same veil, which she calls *maya* illusion. There is a mighty hymn chanted by her through the centuries, a hymn so sacred that only certain ones are privileged to utter it. It is named "Gayatri"—the Mother of Meters—and is an invocation to the Ultimate. An Einstein or a Millikan could take it as their mantram. As I have been told it, it runs thus:

"Unveil, O Thou who givest sustenance to the universe,
From whom all proceed, to whom all must return,
The Face of the True Sun, now hidden by a vase of
golden light,
That we may see the Truth and do our whole duty on
our journey to Thy Sacred Seat."

"The Face of the True Sun, now hidden by a vase of golden light!" We did not realize that matter was such a beautiful, radiant thing,—not dense and opaque but shining. Why should we ever have stood eye to eye with the evening star and recited, "Twinkle, twinkle, little star, how I wonder what you are!" when all the time its clear rays were trying to tell us?

I picked up the stone once more. "Poor stone," I said, "I fear you are doomed, since even science has abandoned you. Yet David found you handy and you seem very real to me. Perhaps the test, after all, lies here, in the individual. Or are there two realities,—the one I create, and the eternal one? Again I turned to Sir James and found an answer:

"The label we have selected does not of course relegate matter into the category of hallucination or dreams. The material universe remains as substantial to us as ever it was, and this statement must, I think, remain true through all changes of scientific or philosophic thought. For substantiality is a purely mental concept, measuring the direct effect of objects on our sense of touch." Or to see it from another angle,—so long as we are impressed with our own material being, we shall not be able to rob the stone of its substance. Yet it does not seem as if never again could we take this changing world so seriously; for now we know it is not what it appears; and even light, it seems, is not the final truth of creation. Sir James shows us science seeking to touch That which lies beyond.

"Many scientists," he admits—and who can measure the implications of such an admission—"would hold that from the broad philosophical standpoint, the outstanding achievement of twentieth century physics is not the theory of relativity, with its welding together of space and time, or the theory of quanta with its present apparent negation of the laws of causation, or the dissection of the atom with the resultant discovery that things are not what they seem; it is the general recognition that we are not yet in contact with ultimate reality."

Suddenly modern science, standing baffled before its veil of light, hemmed in by its own molecules and atoms, seems to assume the guise of a melancholy Hamlet, and I heard its complaint rise to the baffling skies: "Oh, that this too too solid flesh would melt and resolve itself into a dew!" Flesh of man, flesh of grass and flowers, flesh of the earth—what is holding it together and giving it the semblance of permanence—of infinite variety? Mystery behind mystery!

Perhaps, after all, the Eastern is right in using the subtlest,

the finest, the most intimate and flexible of all instruments to penetrate these sheathes of being, relying on the searchlight quality of his own mind, rather than on telescopes and microscopes or even mathematics, to illumine that very Essence in which the without and the within blend and become one.

My eyes, which had ceased to follow the undulations of the hills, being focused on another vision altogether, once more rested on the world around, familiar, beautiful, impalpable in its frail loveliness yet actual—world of the senses, world to be seen and touched and felt and tested—our real world!—so real that it hides reality. . . . But does it? Does it not? Do we not in our lives as well as in our senses live in a world of seeming? Do not the noises around us drown out the eternal song in our heart? Do not the lights and the glitter of what we call our life, even of the great sun itself, make us blind to the Face of the True Sun, so that hearing we do not hear, and seeing we do not see That through which we have the power of seeing and of hearing? We give our whole attention to the little things of a breath and the more fleeting and evanescent the objects of our desire, the more madly we pursue them. Our bargaining and bartering mind clings to the finite because it can be weighed and measured, and shrinks from the infinite because it cannot. Thus we live, carrying the gold and counting the dross, unaware of our treasure save when it gleams forth as love or genius, as faith, power or heroism. Then we pay our homage and thrill for a moment to our own Divine nature, only to turn away once more and forget, caught by the distractions of the outer, the artificial, the mechanical—never again to remember till life, or perhaps death, meets us face to face and with a glance burns all our sham to ashes, leaving us with nothing to call our own save our own inwardness.

In that hour, it may be, if those depths have ever been suf-

ficiently stirred, we shall sense the uncovered mystery which only the uncovered heart can behold, and we shall again hear the Divine word and feel in our soul the suffusion of that Love which is Truth, which is Beauty, which is Light, which is Reality, which is God.

I lifted my eyes almost as if the vision were there before me, but only the flowing signature of the hills wrote itself upon the evening blue. Hosts of shadows, black and forbidding, were marching forth from every canyon and crevice, from every dimple and curve and hollow—were deploying and spreading out in preparation for an attack upon the heights; the lilac haze had deepened to a royal purple. Below, in the valley's depths, flashing stars marked where little automobiles were bearing tiny men home from their miniature offices, with the weight of the world upon their shoulders, while above them thousands of worlds swam serenely through space. Their thoughts, I knew, were whirling, for the most part, around buying and selling and scheming and trading in little grains of dust and soap-bubble dreams. Fame, pleasure, money, petty plans—these absorbed their thoughts, their strength, their hopes and fears, their life itself, while overhead the glory of Truth blazed forth in a beauty that changed but never died.

From a fragrant canyon nearby a bird poured forth its even-song, and as its notes sounded plaintively through the silence, suddenly a tale of my childhood, buried under the impressions of years, rose in my memory. What possible connection could this tale heard long ago have with atoms and star-dust; with vain hopes, vain aims and the small ambitions of men; with the song of a nesting bird? It still had a place on my shelf—this enchanted fairy legend—amid other outgrown books I had not the heart to throw away. I could read it again . . . I would read it again—now. For fairy

tales, after all, are more my affair than science since no one can challenge them. They are quite safe to tell and cheerfully rush in where even scientists fear to tread.

In a moment the old volume with its alluring illustrations was in my hand, and as I read, the canyon around me became the gardens of an Eastern potentate, and the canyon bird . . . but let me give you the story as I, and you too no doubt, once heard it—the story of a Chinese Emperor and a little nightingale.

THE NIGHTINGALE

By Hans Christian Anderson

(adapted)

The Chinese emperor's palace was the most gorgeous in the world. It was built entirely of the finest porcelain and was very costly, but so brittle that one had to take particular care not to touch it. In the garden were the most wonderful flowers, and to them were tied silver bells which rang whenever anybody passed by lest they should miss seeing the flowers. If one walked far in it, one came to the loveliest wood, with lofty trees and deep lakes. The wood ran down to the sea, which was deep and blue; large ships could sail under the branches and in one of these branches dwelt a nightingale which sang so sweetly that even the poor fisherman would stop to listen. "How beautiful it is!" he said, but then he had to see to other things and so forgot the bird. Yet, next night when it sang again, he was sure to say the same thing: "How beautiful it is!"

Travellers came from all parts of the world to see and admire. And when they got home they wrote many books about the city and the palace and the garden, but they did not forget the nightingale; indeed, they put that first. These books in course of time reached the Emperor. He sat on his gold throne and read and read.

"Why, what is this?" said the Emperor—"The nightingale! I had no idea there was such a bird in my kingdom! Must one learn such things from books? This must be looked into."

So he called his lord-in-waiting, who was so very grand that whenever anyone lower in rank than himself presumed to speak to him, he only answered "P!" which meant nothing at all.

"There is said to be a very remarkable bird called the nightingale!" the Emperor informed him. "People declare that it is the finest thing in my vast realm. Why have I not been told about it?"

"I have never heard it so much as mentioned before," replied the lord-in-waiting, "It has never been presented at Court!"

"I command it to come here this very evening and sing to me," said the Emperor. "Why, the whole world knows what I possess and yet I don't know it."

But where was it to be found? The lord-in-waiting ran up and down, but of the people he met not one knew about the nightingale. So the lord-in-waiting came back to the Emperor and said the whole thing must be a fable invented by those who wrote books.

"But the book in which I read this was sent to me by the high and mighty Emperor of Japan," said the Emperor, "and therefore it cannot be an untruth. I wish to hear the nightingale! It must be here this evening! I accord it my most gracious favor. And if it does not come, the whole Court shall be trampled on directly it has eaten its supper!"

"Tsing-pe!" said the lord-in-waiting, and again he ran up and down and half the Court ran with him, for they did not like the idea of being trampled on.

At last they found a poor little girl in the kitchen and she said, "What! the Nightingale! Why, I know it quite well!

Every evening I take the dinner leavings to my poor sick mother, and when I am coming back, I hear the nightingale sing, and then the tears come into my eyes, and it is just as if my mother were kissing me."

"Little scullery-maid," said the lord-in-waiting, "I will get you a permanent situation in the kitchen, with permission to see the Emperor eat, if you will lead us to the nightingale."

So they went together to the wood where the nightingale was wont to sing. Half the Court was there. As they picked their way along, a cow began to low.

"Oh!" said the lord-in-waiting, "now we have it! That is really a remarkable power for so small an animal. Of course we have heard it before. We remember it distinctly."

"No! that is the lowing of the cows!" said the little scullery-maid.

And now the frogs croaked in the marshes.

"Pretty!" said the Chinese Court chaplain, "Now I hear it; 'tis just like tiny temple bells."

"Nay, those are the frogs!" said the little scullery-maid.

Then the nightingale began to sing.

"That's it!" said the little girl. "Listen! Listen!"

"Is it possible?" said the lord-in-waiting. "How very simple it looks! It is a little off color, no doubt, at being visited by so many distinguished persons. Just look how the little throat moves up and down. It is really remarkable we have never heard it before. It will have a great success at Court. My excellent little nightingale," said the lord-in-waiting, "it is my privilege to invite you to a great entertainment at Court this evening, where you will enchant his high Imperial Majesty with your charming voice!"

"It sounds best in the green woods," said the nightingale, but it willingly went with them when it heard that the Emperor wished it.

There were grand doings at the palace. The porcelain walls and floor shone with thousands of gold lamps, the loveliest flowers were set up in the corridors. In the middle of the large room where the Emperor sat, a golden perch had been placed for the nightingale to sit upon. The whole Court was there and the little scullery-maid had leave to stand behind the door. All turned their eyes to the little grey bird when the Emperor nodded to it.

Then the nightingale sang so beautifully that tears came into the Emperor's eyes and trickled right down his cheeks; the notes seemed to go to the very heart; and the Emperor was so delighted that he said the nightingale should have his gold slipper to wear round its neck. But the nightingale declined with thanks; it had been rewarded enough already, it said. "I have seen tears in the eyes of the Emperor, and that is the most precious treasure to me."

It was now to remain at Court, and to have its own cage and the privilege of walking out twice in the daytime and once at night. It was attended by twelve servants, each of whom tied a silk ribbon round its leg and held on fast. There was not very much enjoyment in such a walk as that. The whole town talked about the remarkable bird, and whenever two persons met, one of them immediately said to the other, "Night!" and the other said "Gale!" and then they sighed and understood each other.

One day a large packet arrived for the Emperor and on the outside of it was written, "The Nightingale!"

"Here now we have a new book about our famous bird!" said the Emperor; but it was not really a book but a little work of art, which lay in a box,—an artificial nightingale, covered all over with diamonds, rubies and sapphires. As soon as you wound up this artificial bird, it could sing one of the pieces the real nightingale sang, and then its neck moved up and down

and all the gold and silver on it sparkled. Round its neck was a little ribbon and on this was written "The Emperor of Japan's nightingale is poor compared with that of the Emperor of China!"

"Now the two must sing together," said the courtiers. "What a duet it will be!"

But it would not do at all, for the real nightingale sang in his own way and the artificial bird went by clockwork. "I have no fault to find with it," said the music master; "it's time is perfect and quite of my school." So the artificial bird had to sing alone. It was just as successful as the real one and much prettier to look at besides; it glistened like bracelets and breast-pins. Three and thirty times it sang one and the same piece and yet wasn't tired. The Emperor thought that the living bird ought now to sing a little—but how was this? Nobody had noticed that it had flown out of the open window back to its green woods.

"Did you ever hear of such a thing!" said the Emperor, and all the courtiers stormed. "At any rate we still have the best bird," they said. The music master praised the bird above measure, maintaining that it was better than the real nightingale.

"For look now, your Imperial Majesty, as regards the real nightingale, you can never tell for certain what will come, but as regards the artificial bird everything is fixed and definite. Thus 'twill be and not otherwise. You can explain all about it. You can open it and display the ingenuity of man. You can see the position of the various parts, how they work and how they follow one after the other!"

The real nightingale was banished from the realm.

The artificial bird was placed on a silk cushion close by the Emperor's bed; all the gifts it had received, both of gold and precious stones, lay round about it, and as to titles, why it

had risen to be "High-Imperial-Night-Singer." And the music master wrote five and twenty volumes about the artificial bird. His treatise was long and learned and full of the hardest Chinese words, and all the people said they had read and understood it, for otherwise they would have been considered stupid and been trampled upon.

A whole year passed. The Emperor, the Court and all the other Chinese knew by heart every little cluck in the artificial bird's song, but just for that reason they liked it all the better. But one evening while the artificial bird was singing its best and the Emperor was lying in bed listening to it, something inside the bird said "sooop" and something went "muurrrr!" and the music stopped.

The Emperor at once sprang out of bed and sent for his physician, but what could *he* do! Then he had the watchmaker fetched and after a good deal of talking and peeping, he put the bird somewhat to rights but he said they must spare it as much as possible, for the machinery was so worn that it was not possible to supply new works which could be relied upon to go with the music. It was a great grief. Only once a year could the artificial bird be allowed to sing. But the music master made a little speech full of hard words and said that it was just as good as before.

Five years had now passed and the whole land was bowed down by a great sorrow, for their Emperor was sick and could not live, it was said. Cold and pale he lay in his large and gorgeous bed. The whole Court thought he was dead and every one ran to greet the new Emperor. Cloth coverings were strewn about the rooms and corridors so that people might walk softly, and therefore it was still, oh, so still. But the Emperor was not dead yet. Stiff and pale he lay in his gorgeous bed with the long velvet curtains and the heavy gold tassels. High above, a window stood open and the moon shone in upon the Emperor and the artificial bird.

The poor Emperor could scarcely breathe; it was as if some one were sitting on his chest. He opened his eyes and saw that it was Death who sat upon his breast and had taken up his gold crown and held in one hand the Emperor's golden sabre and in the other his splendid banner. And round about the folds of the large velvet bed-curtains strange-looking heads peeped forth, some quite ugly and others sweet and gentle. They were the Emperor's good and evil deeds gazing at him now that Death was at his heart.

"Music, music!" cried the Emperor, "the big Chinese drum, that I may not hear what they say!"

But the figures remained and Death nodded, just like a Chinaman.

"Music, music!" shrieked the Emperor. "You charming little gold bird, sing, sing—pray do! I have given you gold and precious things; I myself have hung my gold slipper round your neck. Sing, I say, sing!"

But the bird remained silent; there was none to wind it up. And Death kept on looking at the Emperor, and all was so still, so frightfully still.

At that very instant, the most beautiful song sounded close by the window. It came from the little living nightingale which sat upon the branch outside. It had heard the Emperor's sore need and had therefore come to sing hope and comfort to his soul. And as it sung, the shapes round the bed grew paler and paler, the blood passed more quickly through the Emperor's weak limbs, and Death himself listened and said, "Go on, little nightingale, go on!"

"Yes; but will you give me the splendid gold sabre? Will you give me the rich banner? Will you give me the Emperor's crown?"

And Death gave away all these treasures for a song and the nightingale kept on singing. It sang of the silent church-

yard where the white roses grow, where the elderberry tree scents the air and where the fresh grass is wet with mourners' tears. Then Death felt a longing for his garden and swept out of the window like a cold white mist.

"Thanks, thanks!" said the Emperor, "you heavenly little bird! I know you well. 'Twas you I drove out of my realm and yet you have sung the evil visions away from my bedside. How can I reward you?"

"You *have* rewarded me," said the nightingale.

"You must stay with me always," said the Emperor. "You shall only sing when you like and I will break the artificial bird into a thousand pieces."

"Don't do that!" said the nightingale, "After all, it did what it could. Keep it as before. For myself, I cannot fix my abode in the palace. But let me come when I have a mind to and then I will sit on this branch near the window in the evening and sing to you. I will sing of those who rejoice and of those who suffer. I love your heart more than your crown. I'll come, I'll sing to you—but one thing you *must* promise me."

"I'll promise you everything," said the Emperor, and there he stood in his imperial robes, which he had put on himself, and he held his sabre, which was heavy with gold, to his heart.

"One thing I beg of you: tell no one that you have a little bird which tells you everything, and things will be better for you."

And away the nightingale flew.

* * * *

For a long time after the story was ended, I sat silent, watching the final victory of the shadows over the outposts of day. The great flashing swords of the sun had long since broken themselves against the black armor of night, and the sun himself had withdrawn—withdrawn so utterly that not even a line of crimson or gold marked his cosmic retreat.

REAL NATURE OF THE SOUL

From Plato

To understand the real nature of the soul we must look at it not after it is marred by association with the body and other ills; but we must carefully contemplate it by the aid of reasoning when it appears in unsullied purity; then its surpassing beauty will be discovered and the nature of justice and injustice will be far more clearly discerned.

We have looked at it in a state like that of the sea-god Glaucus whose original nature can no longer be readily discerned because the members of his body have either been broken or crushed and marred by the action of the waves, and extraneous substances like shell-fish and sea-weed and stones have grown to him. The soul has been reduced to a similar state by a thousand ills. But we ought to fix our attention on one part of it exclusively, Glaucon.

On which part?

On its love of wisdom, that we may learn to what it clings, and with what it desires to have intercourse, in virtue of its close connection with the Divine, the Immortal and the Eternal; and what it would become if it invariably pursued the Divine and were, by the impulse thence derived, lifted out of the sea in which it now is, and disencumbered of the stones and shell-fish and that uncouth multitude of earthy and rocky substances with which, because earth has been its food, it is now overgrown. And then we should behold its true nature and everything concerning it.

Indeed, believing the soul to be immortal, we shall ever cleave to the upward path and follow after righteousness and wisdom by every means within our power, that we may be dear to ourselves and to the gods, not only while remaining here, but also when, like victors in the games collecting their rewards, we receive the prizes in store for virtue.

VAGRANT THOUGHTS

From the Journal of Eugenie de Guerin

There is an age when the heart becomes indifferent to whatever does not give it life. The world may enchant, may intoxicate it; but this is not life, which is only found in God and in *oneself*. To be alone with God, Oh happiness supreme! . . . That beautiful word of God, how disfigured it gets passing through certain lips! One needs to know beforehand that it comes from heaven.

* * * *

Prayers are Divine flowers. . . . Thy spirit is naturally loving and what is prayer but love? A love that gushes out from the soul, as water from the fountain.

* * * *

Nothing is my own. I feel my aridity, but also feel that God, while He wills, makes an ocean flow over a sandy bed.

* * * *

Oh! if many writers had but begun by a lesson of humility, they would not have made so many errors or so many books. Pride gives birth to numbers.

* * * *

Evening, at twilight. I write with a cool hand, having just returned from washing my gown in the brook. It is pleasant to wash there, to watch the passing by of fish, wavelets, blades of grass, leaves, scattered flowers; to follow all that, and I know not what besides, down the current. So many things occur to the washerwoman who knows how to read the secret of the brook. It is the bath of little birds, the mirror of heaven, the image of life, *a running road*, the font of baptism!

* * * *

Health is like children, spoilt by too much care.

* * * *

I have no fluency in this gilded, brilliant talk, this lip-tinsel that one meets with in the world.

* * * *

One might well spend the night here in describing all that is to be seen and heard in my delectable little room, all that come to visit me in it; small insects, black as night; little spotted, scalloped moths, flying like maniacs about my lamp. There is one burning, another going, a third returning, and on the table something like a grain of dust is walking about. How many inhabitants in this small space! A word, a look to each of these, a question respecting their kindred, their way of life, their home, would lead us into infinity.

* * * *

The bird which seeks its branch, the bee which seeks its flower, the river which seeks its sea, all these but fly, but run to their repose. So flies my soul, O God! so wanders my intelligence, till it finds its branch, its flower, its outlet.

* * * *

There are beings, there are hearts of an order that furnish forth so much for other hearts that the others seem to live by that borrowed life.

PRAYER TO SANTA TERESA

Look down upon me from heaven, blessed Saint Teresa, as I kneel before your image, looking upon the lover of Jesus and fondly desiring that I may be like her! I pray you let the sacred semblance be mine—let me be like you in something! Transfer to me your heavenward eyes to seek God, your heart to love Him, your lips to pray to Him. Give me your fortitude in adversity, your sweetness in suffering, your constancy in the midst of temptation. Let my soul aspire only to heavenly joys; let me live only in the love Divine; let all my affections be rooted in this love; let it consecrate them in me.

WHO IS WISE?

From the Mahabharata

He who by the aid of self-knowledge, exertion, forbearance, and steadiness in virtue does not swerve from the high ends of life, he is called wise. Faith and reverence, adherence to acts worthy of praise, and rejection of what is blameworthy, these again are the marks of a wise man. He whom neither anger nor joy, pride nor false modesty, stupefaction nor vanity can draw away from the high ends of life is considered as wise. He whose . . . acts become known only after they have been done . . . whose proposed actions are never obstructed by heat or cold, fear or attachment, prosperity or adversity, is considered wise. He whose judgment, dissociated from desire, followeth both virtue and profit, and who, disregarding pleasure, chooseth such ends as are serviceable in both worlds is considered wise. He that exerts to his utmost, and acts to the best of his powers, disregarding nothing as insignificant, is also called wise.

He that understandeth quickly, listeneth patiently, pursueth his objects with judgment and not from desire, and spendeth not his breath on the affairs of others without being asked is said to possess the foremost mark of wisdom. They that do not strive for objects that are unattainable, that do not grieve for what is lost and gone, that do not suffer their minds to be clouded amid calamities, their intellects are said to be endued with wisdom.

He who, having commenced anything, striveth till it is completed, who never wasteth his time, and who hath his soul under control, is regarded as wise. They that are wise, O bull of the Bharata race, always delight in honest deeds, do what tendeth to their happiness and prosperity, and never sneer at that which is good. He who exulteth not at honors, and grieveth not at slights, and who remaineth cool

and unagitated, like a lake in the course of Ganges, is reckoned as wise.

He, on the other hand, who is ignorant of Scripture yet vain, poor yet proud, and who resorteth to unfair means for the acquisition of his objects, is a fool. He who, forsaking his own affairs, concerneth himself with the affairs of others, and who practiseth deceitful means for serving his friends, is called a fool. He who wisheth for those things that should not be desired, and forsaketh those that may legitimately be longed for, and who beareth malice toward those that are powerful is regarded as a foolish soul. . . . O bull of the Bharata race, he who divulgeth his projects, doubteth in all things, and spendeth a long time in doing what requireth a short time, is a fool. . . .

When a bowman shooteth an arrow, he may or may not succeed in slaying even a single person, but when an intelligent individual applieth his intelligence viciously, it may destroy an entire kingdom with the king. . . .

There is but one defect in persons who forgive: that people take a forgiving person to be weak. That defect, however, should not be given any consideration, for forgiveness is a great power. Forgiveness is a virtue of the weak, and an ornament of the strong. Forgiveness subdueth all in this world; what is there that forgiveness cannot achieve? What can a wicked person do unto him who carrieth the sabre of forgiveness in his hand? Fire falling on a grassless ground is extinguished of itself. An unforgiving individual defileth himself with many enormities. Righteousness is the one highest good, and forgiveness is the one supreme peace; knowledge is the one supreme contentment; and benevolence one sole happiness.

The love that moves the sun and all the stars.

—Dante Alighieri.

CREDO*

By Helen Keller

I believe that we can live on earth according to the teachings of Jesus, and that the greatest happiness will come to the world when man obeys His commandment "Love ye one another."

I believe that every question between man and man is a religious question, and that every social wrong is a moral wrong.

I believe that we can live on earth according to the fulfillment of God's will, and that when the will of God is done on earth as it is in heaven, every man will love his fellow men, and act towards them as he desires they should act towards him. I believe that the welfare of each is bound up in the welfare of all.

I believe that life is given us so we may grow in love, and I believe that God is in me as the sun is in the color and fragrance of the flower—the Light in my darkness, the Voice in my silence.

I believe that only in broken gleams has the Sun of Truth yet shone upon men. I believe that love will finally establish the Kingdom of God on earth, and that the Cornerstone of that Kingdom will be Liberty, Truth, Brotherhood, and Service.

I believe that no good shall be lost, and that all man has willed or hoped or dreamed of good shall exist forever.

I believe in the immortality of the soul because I have within me immortal longings. I believe that the state we enter after death is wrought of our own motives, thoughts, and deeds. I believe that in the life to come I shall have the senses I have not had here, and that my home there will be beautiful with color, music, and speech of flowers and faces I love.

*From "Midstream." Pub. by Doubleday, Doran & Co., New York.

Without this faith there would be little meaning in my life. I should be "a mere pillar of darkness in the dark." Observers in the full enjoyment of their bodily senses pity me, but it is because they do not see the golden chamber in my life where I dwell delighted; for, dark as my path may seem to them, I carry a magic light in my heart. Faith, the spiritual strong searchlight, illumines the way, and although sinister doubts lurk in the shadow, I walk unafraid towards the Enchanted Wood where the foliage is always green, where joy abides, where nightingales nest and sing, and where life and death are one in the presence of the Lord.

REPORT

On the evening of January 21st, the Vedanta Centre of Boston celebrated its Twenty-third Anniversary. A banquet was given in honor of the occasion and it was attended by a large number of friends of the Centre.

* * * *

On January 31st, the Vedanta Centre observed the Birthday Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. The portrait of the great Swami stood on the altar and was beautifully decorated with offerings of fruits and flowers. Two Services were held in honor of the occasion, in the morning at eleven and in the evening at eight. Swami Paramananda spoke with profound feeling on the life and significant characteristics of his Master. The audience was stirred and they whispered as they left the Chapel that it was a sacred occasion never to be forgotten. Owing to the scarcity of space, we are unable to give a resume of the Swami's utterances but we hope to do so at some future time.

* * * *

The work of the California Ashrama has been faithfully carried on during January by the Sisters and Brothers of the Ashrama. Swami Paramananda will resume charge from the 14th of February and will remain for Easter Sunday.

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Message of the East

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."

—*Ezekiel*

"Light shall come again from the East."

—*Tyndall*

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CHOIR OF IMMORTAL LOVE

Oracle rendered upon Plotinus by Apollo



CELESTIAL! Man at first, but now nearing the diviner ranks! The bonds of necessity are loosed for you and, strong of heart, you beat your eager way from out the roaring tumult of the fleshly life to the shores of that wave-washed coast free from the thronging of the guilty, thence to take the grateful path of the sinless soul: where glows the splendor of God, where Right is throned in that stainless place, where all is unison and winning tenderness and guileless joy, where dwells Plato, consecrated power, and stately Pythagoras, and all else that form the choir of Immortal Love, there where the heart is ever lifted in joyous festival.

O Blessed One, you have fought your many fights; now, crowned with unfading life, your days are with the Ever-Holy.

Thus much I could but tell, to my golden lyre, of Plotinus, the hallowed soul.



UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Always remember that Sri Ramakrishna came for the good of the world—not for name or fame. *Spread only what he came to teach. Never mind for his name—it will spread of itself.*

—Swami Vivekananda.

With respect to religion itself, without regard to names, and as directing itself from the universal family of mankind to the Divine Object of all adoration, it is man bringing to his Maker the fruits of his heart, and though these fruits may differ from each other like the fruits of the earth, the grateful tribute of everyone is accepted.

—Thomas Paine.

What future misery have they and ought they to endure who talk of what is not good in others.

—Mencius.

It is not enough that I should give to whomsoever may ask of me. I must forestall their desires and show that I feel much gratified, much honored in rendering service; and if they take a thing that I use, I must seem as though glad to be relieved of it.

—St. Therese of Lisieux.

No man is worth his salt who is not ready at all times to risk his body, to risk his well-being, to risk his life in a great cause.

—Theodore Roosevelt.

A man that stands alone, having decided to obey the Truth, may be weak and slip back into his old ways. Therefore, stand ye together, assist one another, and strengthen one another's efforts.

Be like unto brothers; one in love, one in holiness, and one in your zeal for the Truth.

—Gautama Buddha.

SPARKS FROM THE FIRE

Intimate Teachings of Swami Paramananda

(Given to the members of the Ananda-Ashrama, La Crescenta, California.)

EVE OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S BIRTHDAY

We are living too much in the outer life. Work, public organization, all these things are assuming too great a proportion, it seems to me. If we can just be really holy, consecrated, devoted, dedicated, united, forgetting ambition, all our personal differences,—everything; if we can become part of real God-life, something that is worthy of Sri Ramakrishna—what Sri Ramakrishna is—a perfect avenue for his manifestation, then what we are doing here will be really worth while. I feel tremendously that the best preparation we can have for the work is giving ourselves to God. We must do it. What is this Temple we are planning to build? This Temple will be nothing to compare with bigger things man has constructed. Therefore let us have the enrichment of the Spirit. We must have it. We must not fail. What are a little success and satisfaction? What is this little life? We must rise above them; we must dare. It requires courage. It is not attained by the weak, the miserable, the people who are afraid—afraid to give up.

We cannot do anything to make ourselves worthy. We are neither worthy or unworthy: we are only dependent on the Supreme Power. That realization is the one true knowledge. If, for instance, tonight, we can be united in our devotion to the One, the Master, the Lord, then all difficulties will vanish. The trouble is, instead of turning within, we try to solve our perplexities through questions, logic and reasoning. That is not the way of the spiritual life. That is not the way! I am realizing more and more why we cannot serve God and mammon. We cannot have two inter-

ests. It is impossible. We must be true. We must! We must be strong in God—His Power. This place would be the most holy of holies if we could hold to that.

Forgive your enemies. Bless them that persecute you. I am always thankful when anything rouses that spirit in me—anything. If someone should come and give me a kick to wake me up to that consciousness, I should say, "Bless your foot!" That is what God-consecrated souls do. That kind of spirit we should have.

We have no reason to be faint-hearted. We have not yet started to do anything. We have not really begun the work that is before us. Service,—giving, giving, giving with a sense of intoxication—giving food to the hungry, comfort to the comfortless—that is the way. People who come to us in perplexity, in difficulties, in an unhappy state of mind, what can we give to them unless we have it ourselves, unless we have a peaceful heart and God's light shining through us? We must not forget this. We cannot afford to be unmindful of it.

Think of these things. They are not merely my personal wisdom. They are true, and anyone with clearness of vision can pronounce them. Remember, no one can hurt us but ourselves. Just be humble like the blade of grass. We trample over it, and yet the blade is unhurt because of its lowliness, its flexibility.

TRUTH, THE ETERNAL PRINCIPLE

Let your heart be fixed on Truth, the eternal Principle, then whatever happens in the external is nothing. We should not take up our ideal for the sake of some momentary gratification. We must be so well-grounded in our nature that no matter what happens, we shall be unshaken. The sun does not give up shining through discouragement, because some days there are a few clouds. The fundamen-

tal principles of life, by their stability, are always proving what eternal Truth is,—unchanging under all circumstances. When we become imbued with that unchanging quality, then are we safe. In the midst of changing things we find That which is unchanging. This is the reason why God is our true Friend. Our human friends change, they misunderstand, they often fail us, but there is One who never fails, never changes—One who is all-loving, all-compassionate, unconditioned. He is not dependent on our attitude or our behaviour; He is always there. The only thing is, when our mind is clear we receive His grace in greater measure. Sometimes we shut out the light.

We should be fired with that Divine spirit. There should be such warmth of feeling that no outer condition can chill us—no discouragement, depression or criticism. We hear less of the world's confusion when we turn our ears to the voice of the Infinite. One who knows the Truth, one who has found his access into the heart of Divinity, his heart is blazing with *Anandam*, the bliss of God, and no fear, no element of fear can enter him. That is the reason why unselfish people are so dynamic. All speculation vanishes from their path.

To-night, there is a very large group assembled here. It is all through His Grace. I think it is the spirit which grows: that is what gives it the sense of bigness. Every one of you should be capable of doing big things; also you can impoverish yourselves through fear, through suspicion of others, by yielding yourselves to weakness. Life is one—eternally one!—but we can break it by bringing in thoughts of littleness, fear and doubt.

Give, give, give! I know what I am saying. More you give, more influx comes. You will never be impoverished that way. It is only when we bring thoughts of self—

thoughts of "what is going to happen to me?"—that we are losers. Then no longer do we trust in the Divine. He has made ample provision for all of us. Not only for us—for all we are capable of giving to others. Everything will be provided for. Who is going to set the limit? Only those who are full of ignorance, conceit and self-concern.

I pray that this spirit of dynamic spirituality, this devotion, will fire your hearts with such feeling and fervor that you will fear nothing, that all mountain-like obstacles will melt before you, and that God—strength—will flow through you.

There is nothing impossible. It is only when we forget our objective, our great Ideal, that we become faint-hearted. Look up to that One—draw, just draw from Him! Never be afraid that you are taking too much. You never can take too much; you cannot give too much: there is an inexhaustible supply. When you come before the altar—the symbol of Eternity—draw, draw, draw all the strength that you need, with this purpose,—that you may serve and love and give and make this world happier today, that your smile may brighten other hearts, that your thoughts may bring courage to other souls. Let that kind of feeling permeate the whole atmosphere of this Ashrama. Let it be symbolic of Paradise.

THE VOW OF CONSECRATION

"We must be spiritually wakeful, sincere and devout whatever we do." There is no way of forcing anything. If we do, we spoil it. Every pain has its purpose, and every pleasure also has its purpose. Every heartache, and the great thrill that we find in our moments of joy,—everything has its proper place. It is just like cultivating a seed; sunshine and even a fierce storm seem to have their part in bringing it to harvest.

Simplicity sometimes takes the form of making us aware of our lack of knowledge. We may think we understand, but there is no understanding except that which comes through Divine Life, and it manifests in a simple heart more readily than in the hearts of people who are perplexed. It is just like a pool of water: if you keep on stirring it up, it does not reflect your face or any other face. A calm, surrendered, simple attitude makes the mind like a mirror. Our success is not dependent on our following this thing or that, but on our making the mind staunch and unwavering.

If the majority of you can form a vow of consecration—and this means abandoning all unnecessary talk, all unnecessary thoughts pertaining to anything that does not concern your highest Ideal, refusing to listen or take part in it—if a group of people such as you are, should make such a holy resolve, think what it would mean! There would be no access for evil in any shape or form, no matter how subtle: it could not penetrate the walls of this inner Temple.

Let us then make this a time of consecration, so that whatever may be lacking, whatever may be bringing us a sense of weight and discouragement, we may rise above it—overcome it. There is nothing impossible when this spiritual force is set in motion. It is like that great saying in the Bhagavad-Gita: “The fire of wisdom burns all impurities to ashes.” We must remember that that kindled fire of wisdom, consecration, devotion, can remove everything, every stain and imperfection, no matter how long these may have been accumulating. I ask you all to think on these things and do them in your own way. Make a resolution that you are not going to look upon life from the lower angle, but from the higher, where things are free, things are beautiful, things are perfect. In the world you hear one thing and then you hear another and there is conflict, conflict, conflict at every turn.

Let us give ourselves more to holy things. Is there not enough love in the universe to infill all our lives? Is there not love, trust, faith, simplicity, humility? After all, what else is there for us to live for? That life is indeed a fruitful life that considers nothing from the outside, that is not dependent on mortals, but has found its anchor in the Immortal, is dependent on That, and free of terrestrial things. That is holy life.

You have all gathered here to drink from the Fountain of holiness. Let nothing sidetrack you. Do not be turned aside because of a little food or clothes, comfort or discomfort, heat or cold, harsh word or soft. What have these to do with the higher things? Christ had nothing to do with these things. Lord Buddha had nothing to do with these things. The saints had nothing to do with these things. The master-spirits have nothing to do with these things. They turn their back on them, and even if their enemies should throw things at them, they remain silent. That is the triumphant spirit. Let such a spirit be infused through you, let it penetrate your being and you will be so happy that you will be happy even in calamity and you will smile at things that once bothered you. I speak of these things because I feel them and I know that they are true principles of life, of the spiritual life. Of course if you want something else, the whole world is before you. We should not, however, make any compromise; whatever we do we must do with wholeness of being, otherwise we do nothing at all, we merely make confusion. All difficulties vanish before the courageous heart. Spiritual life is not for the coward. It always requires courage.

SPARKS OF TRUTH

The man of courage overcomes all difficulties; the man of love overcomes all enmity and hatred. Here is where you

can practise steadfastness, not saying, "I will endure only so far," but always enduring, because there is strength within you which nothing can break. You may say, "That is a very nice thought but I have experienced otherwise." Then you were not thinking steadfastly in one line.

There are moments when we feel exaltation and have faith, and then again, when dark clouds come, we lose our courage and our vision is clouded. It is because we forget. We forget our high principles. Have you ever known anyone to gain anything through worry, through fretting over himself and his misfortunes? Great men build upon their ruins. Suppose they have met with disaster, instead of falling down and weeping, instead of telling others and themselves what they were and what they are now, they clear up the wreckage. Perhaps they may find even a better foundation,—one that is more seasoned through the tragedy—and they build upon that something greater and loftier.

* * * *

When you feel weak in body, think of That which is the higher Source of strength—that Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute. Look up to That. This is very simple if we do not forget.

Nothing is a tragedy unless we make it so by losing our point of view. Every experience in life can be transmuted, made beneficent, wholesome, strengthening, and also we can make it into something that will grind into our being, weakening us, causing us to lose our vision. It wholly depends upon us.

* * * *

It may seem like a very difficult thing to do, to make over our will to Him and at the same time not bring in a sense of self-depreciation. It is the middle path and it means never going to any extreme, never losing our balance.

Humility, of course, takes an avenue of lowliness, but that does not mean a lowliness which harshly condemns one's own self. Rather it is the spirit of lowliness when we realize that He is everything, instead of feeling that we are nothing and there is nothing. Self-depreciation comes with a sense of lack. It is a very subtle distinction. It is something we cannot learn by mental analysis. We learn it through deeper understanding, through spiritual fruition.

* * * *

Who can say to the Supreme, "Take me and make use of me?" Only one who has great courage, great conviction, great power of surrender. So long as we are led by self-will, so long as we are weak in faith, in determination, we cannot do that. So you see, although this teaching is given in a general form, it represents the highest measure of strength, faith and selflessness.

* * * *

We must keep on tuning our life no matter how many times it gets out of tune. When it gets out of tune how quickly we feel it! Our unhappiness is the result of its being out of tune. When it is in tune, it can sing; when it is out of tune, it has no power to sing.

* * * *

Fear, no matter how it comes or what disguise it may wear, is the greatest possible enemy of man, the most destructive element in human life.

Fear nothing! What is there to fear? Little children sometimes are fearless because they know there is a father and a mother to protect them. They dare all things. So should it be with us. This does not mean that we are to rush out and do something reckless, only, as much as we are capable of, we must have that faith and fervent spirit. Shakespeare was indeed inspired when he expressed through the lips of Julius Cæsar:

"Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,
It seems to me most strange that men should fear."

Fear nothing! Man who lives in fear, he lives in death,
that is all. There is no real life in fear and doubt.

* * * *

Truth is a revelation. It always is. It is not a question of belonging to one creed or another, or of subscribing to one faith or another, though this may give us a certain stimulus; the real saving grace is within us. It is not confined to any creed or faith. The reason we adore and worship—and we may legitimately do so—a great being, an exalted personage, with all the power of our heart, with all the enthusiasm of our soul, is because he brings us anew and afresh this realization. Anyone who brings to us the vivid, living radiance of God-consciousness, our indebtedness to him is unbounded. We can never repay what we receive from him. We can never repay. They are called the Gurus, these master-spirits who destroy the darkness of the soul.

Do not think that a person can really honor or worship Christ or a Christ-spirit, if he has aught against a follower of another religion, or vice versa. A Mohammedan, a Hindu, a Jew who has any grudge against a Christian or against anyone belonging to another religion, he may think he is saved because he is a follower of a great prophet or a great teacher, but he becomes his own destroyer. There is no "if" in this. We ought to understand that. The great Saviours all come to proclaim the power of love, tolerance, constructive living, true brotherhood, in order that all men may stand together and worship the same God, acclaim their homage to the same Deity. Anyone who rises up to disturb the balance is doing an awful thing; he is rather an enemy than a friend to the world.

* * * *

There are some people who have reached so exalted a state in their spiritual consciousness that it burns their ear to hear anything that is not pertaining to God or holy things. The idea of God does not mean anything morbid, nor is it confined to singing hymns, prayer or merely reading holy texts. We can see the face of God, the Truth, everywhere. We can hear His voice everywhere—even through the birds and the beasts. When we are ready, the heart becomes so transparent that the Divine has to shine into it from every source. The Divine is everywhere, but we are not always able to see. Some people see ghosts in the dark, and some people see the light of God in the dark. It is what we have within that we reflect.

* * * *

Great artists make a miniature of what they are planning to do, so that they can concentrate upon it. The smaller things we must first make perfect. When we make a small, compact, beautiful thing, it gives us access into the big. So whenever you are troubled in your mind about how you are going to solve the problems of the larger world, leave them alone. The life that is immediately yours will suffice, if you can make it a beautiful one.

* * * *

When someone out of ignorance does us wrong, our desire should be to pour on him the cool water of patience. Is it not a wonderful thing to be able to do something good and beneficent to one who has harmed us? Is it not the injunction of Christ? Is it not the dictate of our own inner being?

Let us then be determined—never forgetting that there is a Power working through us, guiding us, sheltering us and sustaining us. Let us overcome everything that is evil, everything that is discordant, and establish a rhythm in this world of life.

The master is the master under all circumstances. When he speaks, it is music; when he walks, it is rhythm; when he smiles, it is Divine sunshine; when he works, it is the beautiful expression of some art, because he has gained perfect control over himself.

GIANTS OF ENLIGHTENMENT

By Nicholas Roerich

(From "Burning of Darkness," in the "Prabuddha Bharata," Nov. 1931)

When we recollect the great covenants of Eastern Wisdom, a luminous example from our contemporary life stands before us. Giants of Enlightenment are outstanding—the Blessed Ramakrishna and fiery Vivekananda. What an unforgettable example of the blessed Hierarchy—of Guruship! What a covenant for the youth! How touchingly Ramakrishna prayed about the spirit of Vivekananda and how wisely an uplifted Vivekananda carried the principles of his Guru in life. Verily we see the brilliant results of this realized Hierarchy. At the memorial day of Ramakrishna, millions of people, united in spirit, gather in his name, enlightened by a selfless prayer.

Likewise grows mightily the name of Vivekananda, and there is no such literate country where these great names together with Premananda, Brahmananda, Saradananda and other glorious disciples of Ramakrishna are not cherished.

High was the principle of their Teachings and wise was their application in life. Through each touch they burn some of the darkness. And there was nothing destructive in their Teaching. Radiantly sound the calls of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda: "Do not destroy!"—for the Blessed Hierarchy knows but the positive creation.

After the glorious spiritual leadership of ancient times, it is a real treasure to realize that in our days of commotion we also had before us these luminous examples.

MY FAVORITE

(In Memoriam, Robert Sakkis)*

In sorrows not dejected, and in joys
 Not overjoyed; dwelling outside the stress
 Of passion, fear and anger; such an one
 Is Muni, is the Sage, the true Recluse!
 He who to none and nowhere overbound

* * * *

Never the spirit was born; the spirit shall cease to be never;
 Never was time it was not; End and Beginning are dreams!
 Birthless and deathless and changeless remaineth
 the spirit for ever;
 Death hath not touched it at all, dead though the
 house of it seems!

Who knoweth it exhaustless, self-sustained,
 Immortal, indestructible,—shall such
 Say, "I have killed a man, or caused to kill?"

Nay, but as when one layeth
 His worn-out robes away,
 And, taking new ones, sayeth,
 "These will I wear today!"
 So putteth by the spirit
 Lightly its garb of flesh,
 And passeth to inherit
 A residence afresh.
 (My garb to science has gone!
 And I to Eternity's dawn.)

*It is interesting to find how the thoughts of the Bhagavad-Gita, or "Song Celestial," are enshrined in the hearts of men. Here is an interesting example.—Editor.)

THE SERVANT OF GOD

From the "Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna"

Sri Ramakrishna. The task of a preacher is very difficult indeed. Unless you have authority from God, you cannot teach men. Even if you try without it, nobody will heed you, and your words will have no power in them. Therefore by Sadhana (spiritual practice) or otherwise, first realize God. When you have been ordained by Him, then deliver lectures. Man,—poor, insignificant thing! he can never teach mankind unless he is endowed with the power of God. What is man that he can hope to liberate others from the bondage of the world? He, the Creator of the illusion, the illusion that bewitches the universe, he alone can grant us freedom from it. He, Existence, Knowledge, Bliss Absolute, the Supreme Guide, He is our only refuge. What man can dare to procure freedom from the world for other men, unless he has found the Lord and received his ordination direct from Him and has been empowered with His power?

Bijoy. Sir, why are we in bondage like this? Why do we not see God?

Sri Ramakrishna. Man's ego itself is Maya (illusion), and this ego has hidden everything as in a veil. "Verily with the death of 'I' all trouble ceaseth.'" For if by the grace of God a man can once gain the knowledge that he is not the doer, he assuredly becomes a freed soul and transcends all fear.

This Maya, that is to say, the ego, is like unto the cloud which though comparatively small, veils the sun. The sun shines forth as soon as the cloud is removed. So if the Guru, in his infinite mercy, destroys our egoism, God becomes at once revealed. Just behold how I hide my face with this kerchief; now you no longer see me, even though

I am so very near you. And verily God is nearer than the nearest, yet because the veil of Maya hides Him, you do not see Him.

The real Self of man is Existence—Knowledge—Bliss. But the Maya of the ego has imposed upon him various limitations, and he has forgotten the true nature of his Self. The nature of man changes with the addition of each limitation. Money is a great limitation. When a man becomes rich, his nature undergoes a change, and he is no longer the same man.

A certain frog possessed a rupee which it preserved in its hole. One day an elephant was going over its hole. At that the frog became so angry that it came out and did as though it were kicking at the elephant, and said, "How darest thou to go over my head?" Money makes one so proud.

Egoism can be got rid of if enlightenment comes, for then one enters into Samadhi, and only in Samadhi is the "I" obliterated. But such enlightenment is very difficult to obtain. The Vedas declare that a man can attain Samadhi—Samadhi that destroys the ego—only when his mind has risen to the seventh plane. Where does the mind dwell ordinarily? On the first three planes, and then the mind is strongly attached to the world,—to Kamini-Kanchana (lust and gold). When the mind abides in the heart, the man sees the light of God, and cries out, "Ah, what is this? What is this?" Next comes the plane of the throat and when the mind dwells in it, the man longs to speak and listen to the words of God alone. When the mind reaches the plane of the forehead between the eyebrows, he sees the form of that Existence—Knowledge—Bliss and wants to touch and embrace It, but he cannot; he sees the flame as though within a lantern, but cannot touch it. He only ap-

pears to do so. And when the mind has risen to the seventh plane, the ego is no more, the self is plunged into Samadhi!

Bijoy. When man rises to the seventh plane and attains the knowledge of Brahman, what does he behold?

Sri Ramakrishna. Our lips cannot express what happens when the mind reaches this seventh plane! The ship, if it once goes down under the black waters of the sea, never returns; none can say what happens to it. A salt doll went to measure the depth of the sea; but the moment it entered into the water, it melted. Who could say how deep the sea was? That which could say, became one with it.

The "I" that drags you into the world and binds you to Kamini-Kanchana, that "I" is the "I" of great evil. It is this "I" which intervenes and causes the feeling of otherness between the individual and the Universal Soul.

If the "I" must remain, let it remain as the "servant I." "O God, Thou art my Lord, I am Thy servant!"—live like that. Verily the "I" of the servant and the devotee of the Lord is not an evil. Jnana-Yoga, the path of Knowledge, is very difficult. You cannot obtain Knowledge till the body-idea is completely gone. In this Kali Yuga our mind is extremely attached to material things, we therefore cannot overcome the idea of the body or the ego. The path of Devotion is easier to walk. With sincere earnestness, sing His name and praise, and pray to Him; without doubt, you will realize Him. Yes, devotion alone brings His vision. But it must be ripe devotion, the Devotion of love and attachment, the Premabhakti. When you have attained this devotion, you begin to love Him in the same way as the child loves its mother, or the mother loves her child, or as the wife loves her husband.

Do what you will, nothing can be achieved without the grace of God. And does His grace come easily to a man?

You must once for all banish your egoism. He cannot be seen so long as you feel you are the doer. It is only through His grace that one can see Him. He is the Sun of Knowledge! One single ray from Him has lighted the world with knowledge. Hence it is that we know each other, and acquire varied wisdom of the world! If only He turns His light upon His face we can have vision of Him.

THE VISION GLORIOUS

From the Sufi Wisdom

(Compiled from sayings of the early Sufi mystics, of about the ninth century, A.D.)

Love is not to be learned from men: it is one of God's gifts and comes of His grace.

None refrains from the lusts of this world save him in whose heart there is a light that keeps him always busied with the next world.

When the gnostic's spiritual eye is opened, his bodily eye is shut: he sees nothing but God.

Gnosis is nearer to silence than to speech.

When the heart weeps because it has lost, the spirit laughs because it has found.

Nothing sees God and dies, even as nothing sees God and lives, because His life is everlasting: whoever sees it is thereby made everlasting.

O God, I never listen to the cry of animals or to the quivering of trees or to the murmuring of water or to the warbling of birds or to the rustling wind or to the crashing thunder without feeling them to be an evidence of Thy unity and a proof that there is nothing like unto Thee.

O my God, I invoke Thee in public as lords are invoked, but in private as loved ones are invoked. Publicly I say, "O my God!" but privately I say, "O my Beloved!"

THE LEGEND OF THE SILVER PYX

Retold by Mary B. Dain

In sunny southern France, in the beautiful valley of the Tarn, lies the quaint old village of Cahuzac. Its narrow streets climb the rugged hills to the grassy slopes, and on a rocky crest, overlooking the river and the valley, stands the ancient monastery of Cahuzac, with its gothic church nearby. In spring and summer hawthorne grows along the hedges, acacias bloom by the roadsides, and the village gardens are bright with pimpernel and star flowers. On the south side flows the river Tarn, and on the north, green fields meet the line of forest, whose dense growth of pines, bordered by elms and chestnuts, softens the winter winds over the valley.

Many many years ago, when kings and priests had greater power than they have today, a strange event occurred which greatly stirred the people of Cahuzac. This event was no less than a theft of the silver pyx from the altar of the church. In the memory of the village folk, no mass had ever been celebrated without it! Long ago, said some of the oldest grandsires of the town, a silver cross had been stolen from the neck of the Blessed Virgin. But this new crime, the taking of the Blessed Sacrament, was more dreadful still. It was not strange that the startling news spread quickly from mouth to mouth, for in olden times the village church was the heart and centre of all that concerned the life of the people. There they carried their joys and sorrows to the Fathers of the church; there was all they knew of beauty in art and music. So the men and women at work in the fields gathered in groups to talk of the unholy deed, and the shepherds on the hills guarding their flocks whispered to each other in awe. Several days had now gone by with no word of the sacred relic.

"Who would dare touch the holy bread?" said one. "It would be the loss of his soul, though he be not discovered."

"It could not be one of our own parish," said another; "None among us would be so base."

"It might be some wayfarer passing through the village," said another; "such would find it an easy matter."

"Alas, then, there will be no return," said the first. "The thief will be far away ere this, unless his conscience bid him retrace his steps."

And the wonder grew.

But the theft had come about far otherwise.

On the edge of the village and near the woodland, lived a young peasant girl named Ursule. In those far off days there were no schools, except the church and convent schools. Little children had no story books nor fairy tales to make them happy, and they could not have read them, as they were not taught to read. "Of what use," said the priests, "would reading be to them? When they are of an age to work they must be busy from dawn to dark, and on the sabbath, reading would make them forget their prayers and their duty to the church."

So little Ursule was taught the catechism and the prayers. She knew her beads, the Hail Marys and the Pater-nosters; and on the Sabbath and holy days, she went with her parents to mass. She knelt with devotion before the lighted altar, and gazed with wonder upon the images and pictures of saints and angels around her. Dolls and toys for little girls were not so plentiful as they are today, so Ursule's thoughts turned very often toward heavenly things.

When at dawn she heard her mother's voice calling: "Wake, daughter, the sun is lighting the hill tops!" she would rise quickly and soon be ready to help her father take the flocks to the hillside. Then she had hours to dream and

to play. While the sheep and lambs grazed on grassy slopes, she would wander into the sweet scented woods. She was an only child, but not lonely, because the woods were peopled for her with fairies and angels. It was not strange for little Ursule to see the fairies, for she believed in them. The fairies are there, of course, all the time, but it is only to such as believe in them that they show themselves. They came and danced on the soft carpet of pine needles and talked to Ursule.

In a favorite spot near the edge of the wood, she had chosen a beautiful rose tree, and under it made a little shrine. Here in the early morning she would kneel and say a Paternoster, and in the evening when the ringing of the Angelus called the workers home from the fields, she would drop upon her knees and say the evening prayer. She was sure that then she heard the sound of wings and the angel voices.

It was a day in harvest time. The morning mass was over. The men and many of the women had gone to the fields to gather in the ripened grain. But the thought of the Blessed Sacrament stayed with Ursule, and she lingered, to enter the church again. As she knelt at the altar rail, she thought: "If I but had the Lord's sacred body in the forest, would not God be pleased to have it worshipped there, and not shut up in the church?"

The church was empty and silent; a faint light still burned on the altar, and the silver pyx lay shining there. She could not resist it, but, climbing the steps of the altar, she wrapped it in her apron, and carried it to her shrine under the rose tree. "I will keep it only a little time," she thought, "and pray before it to the Blessed Virgin, and then return it to the altar."

So she made a safe place for it, and covered it with fra-

grant balsam boughs, and gathered star flowers for her forest altar.

But when one evening her father brought home the news that the sacred pyx had disappeared from the church, and the priests and people were looking for the thief, she trembled. Her heart turned cold with fear. She could not return it now. If she confessed would Father Anselme understand? And did she dare tell her father and mother? She was not used to sharing her thoughts, except with the creatures of the woods and fields.

Next day she knelt by her rose tree and prayed that she might be shown what to do. Two shepherds, returning home over the fields, saw a young maiden kneeling as if in prayer, and their minds were filled with suspicion, because of the loss of the sacred pyx.

"Why is she kneeling there?" asked one of the other. "It is time young maids were at home, and not in the woods at dusk."

"Let us wait until she is gone, that we may go and see if aught is there," answered the other.

So they waited at a distance, in the shadow of the trees, until Ursule, her prayer ended, her bare feet soundless on the soft turf, ran toward the village.

And when the shepherds discovered the silver pyx, carefully covered with balsam, they ran with their news to the parish.

The word soon spread, and a procession of nine priests from the church and monastery came to kneel and worship the Blessed Sacrament under the rose tree. But Ursule had often been seen with her flocks on the hillside, and playing in the woods. So she was questioned, and accused, and taken away to be held for trial. The angry priests so frightened her that she could only weep, but would answer nothing.

Now the king of France had made a very harsh law, that whoever was found guilty of robbing a church must not only return the stolen goods, but should be put to death. There was no one to travel to the king and beg a pardon for Ursule, to tell him that this was but an unwise little peasant girl, and not a thief. It might not have helped her cause, even then, as the parish priests had more power with the people than the king. And the priests in solemn council had decided that she must die; that she should be burned at the stake. All but Father Anselme. He begged for the child's life. Father Anselme had heard her weekly confessions all her short life, and had prepared her for confirmation. He still hoped she would open her heart to him.

And now Ursule, who had roamed in freedom over the green fields, and played with fairies in the woods among the trees and flowers, was a prisoner, and the father and mother were alone in the cottage on the hill. Lonely and afraid, she pressed her face against the window of the room that was her prison, and prayed to the Blessed Virgin and to the angels to help her. She knew the fairies never left their home in the woods, but she hoped and listened for the angel voices. At home, outside her bedroom window, a chaffinch would come to sing his morning song, but the lovely creatures of the woods did not come to her now. Still she hoped and prayed. It was hard to keep her faith when no answer came, but an answer to prayer does not always come in the way we expect it.

Then the day came when, with hands tied, she was led out to the open square of the village, amid a crowd of the cruel and the curious. She could see no pity in the hard faces pressing around her, and heard only angry murmurs. Those that loved her stood far back, weeping. Ursule was young and had known little but kindness. She knew noth-

ing of a burning at the stake. Men had cut down her lovely rose tree and made it into faggots, and as she saw the stake and the faggots, her heart failed her from fear. Would they be so cruel when she had intended no wrong? Then she begged that it might be Father Anselme who would hear her last confession.

She kneeled before him, and he placed a hand upon her head.

"My child," he asked, "did you do this deed? And if so, tell me why."

She raised her face and eyes to the sky, with hands lifted in prayer.

"Father," she answered, "I did take the sacred pyx, but it was not to steal. I thought God would be pleased to have the Blessed Sacrament worshipped in the forest, where the birds sing and the angels answer prayer; and I intended to take it back."

As she said these words a shadow came between the people and the sunlight, as if it were the shadow of wings. Then the priests and people were afraid, for though they saw nothing, they heard a voice speak, saying: "This child is pure of heart. She has committed no sin: grant her thy pardon."

The faces of the people turned white with fear and awe; but Ursule saw the vision, and in her face was only joy. Then Father Anselme spoke with authority, while the spirit was upon them: "My people, you cannot commit a crime against this child, for her pardon is from heaven. Away with stakes and faggots! Let us hasten to the church and offer a prayer of thanksgiving that we have not done this great wrong today." Then the people, as they followed Father Anselme, pressed forward and cut the rope that bound Ursule, and she was free.

And Ursule, escaping the crowd, turned toward her home, but desire drew her steps first toward the forest. The rose tree was gone, but the birds still sang, the perfume of the pine needles was everywhere, and all about her she felt the spirit of God, inhabiting His permanent shrine.

Thus was the silver pyx stolen and restored to the village church of Cahuzac, so many years ago.

RELIGION, SCIENCE AND IMMORTALITY

By Thomas A. Edison

(In an authorized interview with Edward Marshall.)

At present the soul's immortality is one of those things in which man instinctively believes, but about which there is no proof when it is regarded from the strictly practical standpoint. Would proof help us?

Perhaps the effort and money which would be required by such investigations might be better spent on making people happy. Any money intelligently devoted to teaching people how to live this life rightly also will help to teach them how to get the best out of whatever life may lie beyond. Make people useful, thinking, aspiring, joyous creatures here, and it will be safe to trust what is to come to the Great Power which rules all things; do that, and we can leave the rest to his disposal. . . .

If it is impossible to destroy material things—and we know this to be the case, although, of course, their forms may be completely changed—the destruction of the immaterial and infinitely more potent things would be an unreasonable supposition. . . .

As the basis of religion, safe and sound and sure, we have the teaching of a few men with great minds whom we call prophets and whose leadership of thought has been of

incalculable value. That humanity instinctively has appreciated their importance and the value of that which they have taught is indicated by the permanence of their influence. That of any of the four—Christ, Buddha, Confucius or Mohammed—has been far and away greater than the influence of any material scientist yet produced. Collectively they have dominated civilization. Only truth can live thus.

The teachings of Christ have shown a greater vitality than any other, for they are accepted annually today by more new minds than any other, in spite of the fact that those who have attempted to interpret them for other people—and have announced themselves competent to do so by calling themselves theologians and becoming heads of churches—have disagreed more widely and more bitterly with regard to what is truth than leading interpreters of any of the other teachers.

The triumph of Christianity over those who have called themselves infidels or skeptics is as nothing in comparison with its triumph over those who have called themselves Christians. . . . I am a full subscriber to the moral code of Christ, as to all true moral codes.

Somehow I cannot be impressed by the idea that merely spoken prayers are likely to be answered, but I am absolutely sure that lived prayers are certain to be answered. . . .

Services in churches do not appeal to me so very much, though I do not decry them; obviously they are dear to multitudes of hearts, and anything which rightly helps one man or woman or a little child helps the whole world.

But there are things that actually help, such as the Sermon on the Mount. That is real teaching. I cannot see that creeds amount to anything, and personally I am amazed because apparently sound minds set such great store by

them. In science only one thing counts, and that is basic truth. Perhaps some day we shall find that science and religion do not differ in this matter.

I wish churches might all become real community centres and nuclei of general instruction concerning the great depths of life as taught by the book of natural phenomena which always lies open to our study. For those great truths of life are also the great truths of religion and must be the truths of immortality. In the churches usually congregate the best people of every group, and therefore they would make far better gathering places for this sort of study than any of our other institutions.

As such they might teach morals rather than creeds. That is the Christ-idea, and what Christ did, what Buddha did and what Confucius did. I am not so deeply certain of the value of Mohammed's teaching, because he achieved eminence by means of war and always had as the background of his thought the idea of war and the destruction of the other fellow's life if his belief did not exactly gibe with yours.

The important thing, it seems to me, is that the believers in Christianity, as its founder did, should forget hair-splitting, all details of theology and all divisions into creeds. Christ made Christianity; man makes the creeds.

Nature can teach us more about God Almighty in a day than all the text books in the theological seminaries can teach us in ten years. I think an oak leaf or the busy efforts of a squirrel to lay up food for the winter, might form a better text for an inspiring sermon on a summer's day, or the infinite beauty of a snowflake on a Sunday morning in winter, than any sentence from, for instance, Jeremiah's pessimistic lamentations as applied to modern life by some theologian anxious to prove out his theory and for-

getful of the Ten Commandments or Jesus' talks to His disciples. . . .

And what finer edifice for such religious Services as I have in mind could be discovered on a pleasant Sabbath than the leafy arches of the woods, more beautiful than any nave in the most wonderful cathedral, with soft greenery of peaceful meadows, full of miracles of grass, of wild flowers and of bees, butterflies and breezes.

The laboratories of the colleges and universities, the research departments of the great industrial concerns, are places where the word of God is revealed and worshipped, even though some of the worshippers know not that they are uncovering it and bowing down before it.

The world needs saving, it is worth saving, and it can be saved. An educational church could do much toward its salvation.

THE LOVER AND THE BELOVED

By Ramon Lull

(Compiled from the "Book of the Lover and the Beloved," translated from the Catalan by E. Allison Peers. Ramon Lull was a Spanish Majorcan mystic and scholar of the 13th century, a forerunner of the great mystics who made brilliant Spanish spiritual annals three hundred years after his death. Of him his translator says: "To the Service of his Master, for whom alone he lived and for whom he died, Lull was able to bring the full and complete tribute of an efficient and active body, a superb mind, and an ardent, unconquerable spirit." He died in North Africa in 1315, being stoned to death because of the too open preaching of his faith.)

Long and perilous are the paths by which the Lover seeks his Beloved. They are peopled by cares, sighs and tears. They are lit up by love.

Said the Lover to the Beloved: "Thou that fillest the sun with splendor, fill my heart with love." And the Beloved answered: "Wert thou not filled with love, thine eyes had not shed those tears, nor hadst thou come to this place to see thy Beloved."

The Beloved made trial of his Lover to see if his love for Him were perfect, and He asked him how the presence of the Beloved differed from His absence. The Lover answered: "As knowledge and remembrance differ from ignorance and oblivion."

The Beloved asked the Lover: "Hast thou remembrance of anything with which I have rewarded thee, that thou wouldst love me thus?" "Yea," replied the Lover, "For I distinguish not between the trials that Thou sendest me and the joys."

"Say, O Lover," asked the Beloved, "If I double thy trials wilt thou still be patient?" "Yea," answered the Lover, "So that thou double also my love."

The bird sang in the garden of the Beloved. The Lover came, and he said to the bird: "If we understand not one another's speech, we may make ourselves understood by love; for in thy song I see my Beloved before mine eyes."

"Say, thou bird that singest of love, why does my Beloved, He who has made me His servant, do nought but torture me now?" And the bird replied: "If love made thee not to bear trials, what couldst thou give to show thy love for Him?"

They asked the Lover: "Wherein is the glory of thy Beloved?" He answered: "He is Glory itself." They asked him: "Wherein lies His power?" He answered: "He is Power itself." "And wherein lies His wisdom?" "He is Wisdom itself." "And wherefore is He to be loved?" "Because He is Love itself."

The Lover longed for solitude and went away to live alone, that he might gain the companionship of his Beloved, for amid many people he was lonely.

The Lover was all alone, in the shade of a great tree. Men passed by that place and asked him why he was alone.

And the Lover replied: "I am alone, now that I have seen you and heard you; until now, I was in the company of my Beloved."

They asked the Lover where his love first began. And he replied: "It began in the glory of my Beloved; and from that beginning I was led to love my neighbor even as myself, and to cease to care for deception and falsehood."

"Say, Fool of Love, if thy Beloved no longer cared for thee, what wouldst thou do?" "I should love Him still," he replied. "Else must I die; seeing that to cease to love is death and love is life."

Said the Lover to his Beloved: "Thou art all, and through all, and in all, and with all. I would give Thee all of myself that I may have all of Thee, and Thou all of me." The Beloved answered: "Thou canst not have Me wholly unless thou art wholly Mine." And the Lover said: "Let me be wholly Thine and be Thou wholly mine." The Beloved answered: "If I am wholly Thine, what part in Me will thy son have, thy brother, thy sister and thy father?" The Lover replied: "Thou, O my Beloved, art so great Whole, that Thou canst abound and yet be wholly of each one who gives himself wholly to Thee."

The Lover entered a delightful meadow, and saw in the meadow many children who were pursuing butterflies, and trampling down the flowers: and the more the children labored to catch the butterflies, the higher did these fly. And the Lover, as he watched them, said: "Such are they who with subtle reasoning attempt to comprehend the Beloved who opens the doors to the simple and closes them to the subtle. And Faith reveals the secrets of the Beloved through the casement of love."

The Lover cried aloud to all men, and said: "Love bids you ever love: in walking and sitting, in sleeping and wak-

ing, in buying and selling, in weeping and laughing, in speech and in silence, in gain and in loss—in short, in whatsoever you do, for this is Love's commandment."

The Beloved sang, and said: "Little the Lover knows of love, if he is ashamed to praise his Beloved, or if he fears to do Him honor in that place where He is most dishonored; and little has he learned to love who is impatient of tribulations; and he who loses trust in his Beloved loses also his love and hope."

The Lover said to the people: "He who truly remembers my Beloved, in remembering Him forgets all things around; and he who forgets all things in remembering my Beloved, is defended by Him from all harm, and receives a part in all His blessings."

Said the Lover: "O ye that love, if ye will have fire, come light your lanterns at my heart; if water, come to my eyes whence flow the tears in streams; if thoughts of love, come gather them from my meditations."

The Lover said to the Beloved: "By many ways dost Thou come to my heart, and revealest Thyself to my sight; and by many names do I name Thee. But the love by which Thou sustainest me and humblest me is one, and one alone."

REPORT

VEDANTA CENTRE OF BOSTON

Friends of the Boston Centre will always remember the last Thursday evening before Swami Paramananda's departure for the West. After the Hindu dinner all sat round the fireplace and listened to the Swami who spoke informally and from his heart. He touched upon the many existing problems of the world today and struck his usual characteristic note of peace and understanding. Some of the old friends of the work were present and the Swami called upon them to say a few words. Everyone was delighted when to their surprise he announced that he would return to Boston early

in April in order to celebrate the completion of twenty-five years in this city.

CINCINNATI AND LOUISVILLE ACTIVITIES

On his way to California, Swami Paramananda stopped at Cincinnati for a day, where he was received by the many friends who had patiently awaited his coming. On Sunday, February 7th, the Swami gave two lectures which were well attended and greatly appreciated.

For many years the Louisville Truth Centre has been vitally interested in the Swami's visits which have become infrequent due to his many other activities. On this trip the Centre surpassed itself in its warm reception. The Swami stayed there less than forty-eight hours which were crowded with constant activity and overflowing with interest. Mrs. Georgianna Tree West, the head of the Truth Centre, had arranged three lectures which brought audiences numerous and most enthusiastic. Mrs. West expressed that the Louisville Centre has never before seen so many faces. The Swami was deeply impressed by their appreciation and promised to return before very long.

ANANDA-ASHRAMA IN CALIFORNIA

The Ashrama was indeed happy to receive the Swami once again. Sunny, warm California has known real discipline this winter, having been constantly swept by rains, snowstorms and cold blasts. The Swami's presence could not force the "unusual" to become "usual" though it brought joy and light to many expectant hearts. February the 14th was set apart for the Celebration of Swami Vivekananda's birthday when Swami Paramananda held two services in honor of the day. In spite of rains and snowstorm many people came up the hill to hear the Swami speak on the life of his Master. He spoke with fire as he gave his reminiscences of this great world hero, and he made all feel the power of Swami Vivekananda's dynamic life of faith and devotion. A beautiful altar was decorated with the picture of Swami Vivekananda in meditation enshrined in fragrant acacia and Spring flowers.

Swami Paramananda will remain at Ananda-Ashrama throughout the month of March and will conduct all Services and Classes there and also at the Hollywood Centre.

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—Ezekiel

"Light shall come again from the East."

—Tyndall

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SOURCE OF STRENGTH

By Swami Paramananda



THE real strength of life abides in a peaceful heart. At this very moment, repeating the magic word "peace," it has dawned upon my mind as never before that the real strength of the world, the real strength of the individual and, shall we say, of the universe is manifested only as we come into blending harmony. So long as we are at war with ourselves we can never realize it, and certainly we cannot convey it to others, no matter how eloquent may be our speech, how scheming our mind, or how clever our expression of thought may be. The real strength is born in the depth of silence and it permeates through the atmosphere of peace.

"Do not pray for easy lives. Pray to be stronger men. Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers. Pray for powers equal to your tasks. Then the doing of your work shall be no miracle. But you shall be a miracle. Every day you shall wonder at yourself, at the richness of life which has come to you by the grace of God."

Phillips Brooks in his characteristic way laid this emphasis upon strength. Often we think that it is only when we are in difficulty that we should pray, otherwise there is no necessity. That is the average man's concept. He feels that he

need not turn to the Supreme Spirit except in an emergency. But it is not only on rainy days that we should polish the mirror of our hearts; on sunny days as well we should keep it so clear that the light will not be marred by any kind of blemish. "God helps those who help themselves." We all know this. It is an ordinary saying; also it is not ordinary, for it embodies an eternal principle. The man who slumbers through life always thinking that something is going to come to him by accident is not the man who finds the greatest blessing. Nothing comes that way, or if it does, he is not able to recognize it. He goes on waiting—like an emperor of India who lived in such royal luxury, and as a result had lost so completely the habit of self-exertion, that when his enemies attacked him he waited for his servant to bring his slippers. But the servant could not come because the attack had altered everything. It is a very characteristic story and is perhaps a little like our present situation. The whole world is now feeling the pang that comes through depression. This feeling is everywhere; we are all conscious of it, but the question is how to get rid of it. We must not wait for someone to bring us comfortable slippers. It is a time when there must be self-exertion. We are waiting for something to happen, for somebody to come along and help us, but the real help comes to the individual only when he himself strives to work out of his difficulty.

The gracious Being who sees everything, feels everything, knows everything, helps us because we are deserving of help, because we are helping ourselves. That reserve of strength which is within us seems to unfold. It is as if God said: "This man is making use of what he has, I think I will invest my trust in him." Or as a father says to his son: "My boy, you have done well with what I have given you, therefore I shall let you have more." Those, however, who stand still

and wait for opportunities to come to them go on waiting and in the end are still waiting—for what?

“Let this truth be present to thee in the excitement of anger, that to be moved by passion is not manly, but that mildness and gentleness as they are more agreeable to human nature, so also are they more manly and he who possesses these qualities possesses strength, nerves and courage, and not the man who is subject to fits of passion and discontent.”

This marvelous saying is from Marcus Aurelius. Truth is not anyone's specialized property. There is no one who has any monopoly over it. Wherever the heart is clean and pure and earnest and sincere, there it dawns. Even on a cloudy day the sun sometimes shines, it comes through the clouds, but those who have made up their minds that there is no chance of the sunshine and that they may just as well keep their doors and windows closed, are deprived of it even when it does come out for a single moment to give forth its radiance. Do not let us be bound by prejudice, pre-conceived notions, and thus shut our doors and windows, figuratively speaking. Even at the Services here in our “Nature's Sanctuary” there are people who sit with all the avenues of their soul closed. They are like travelers who go abroad, but take all the habits of home with them—same atmosphere, same thoughts, same connections. They find nothing new and nothing new can touch them.

Man has a very potent will. Through it he can either open himself to the grace of Divinity or so shut himself in that no light can penetrate. Often in his darkness he feels proud that he is so strong. But is he strong? Does a man ever exhibit any strength who is misguided by egotism, vanities and self-will? Is a man strong when he displays a terrible temper, or when any little thing is able to upset him? No. We sometimes think that if under the impulse of anger a

man rises to annihilate someone that man is powerful. He is not. He is a very weak person. That which is strong is not easily moved. It is not a question of bodily strength—we see plenty of that—or even of mental strength. Something deeper is required, so deep that nothing from the outer atmosphere can affect it. Where can such strength be found? One who lives on the surface, if he is swayed by circumstances, no matter how resolute he may be, that man is not strong. But he who lives in the depths of his nature is not easily overthrown. Trees give us a splendid example of this. Lately we have been doing some transplanting and we have found that the reason some trees do not make progress is because their roots have not gone deep enough. As a result, the tree has no strength. A wind storm uproots it. Anything that is deep-rooted, however, is able to stand when everything else goes down.

What is the best thing for us to possess in order that we may be strong? Where lies the source of our strength? In our body? In the bank account which we hoard, feeling we are so clever? In our intellectual keenness? Here is a question we have to think out for ourselves. There is no one who can really answer it for us. Somebody who has never thought deeply along these lines might reply in a superficial way: "God is our strength," but his words will not convey anything or convince any one. To make his speech living, a man must come close to that great Reality and feel Its surging force. Then in the days of storm and strain he will stand like a deep-rooted tree. Knowing he is well-anchored, he will not fret, he will feel no anxiety; rather he will be conscious of an unshakable power. A man of this stature never creates an atmosphere of discontent, unhappiness or restlessness either for himself or for his fellows. People who are unhappy—or, shall I say, who are weak—it is not that they

themselves alone suffer, even unconsciously they make others suffer. One who has no faith often destroys another human's faith. Merely to look at his countenance, all lined with worries, discontent, disgust and disbelief, is enough; he does not need to say anything, his very atmosphere is sufficient to poison and discourage those around him. That man, however, who has taken deep root, who finds real strength in the Divine Principle, he may live silently, but his influence permeates. There are some people who never speak, or speak very little, yet they seem to bless other lives. It is not just a question of how eloquent words may be. Words without thought are nothing, they are less than nothing. The thing is, these men seem to convey through their very being. So a strong person—that is, strong in God, in Truth—is a blessing to mankind.

In these days of turmoil and dissatisfaction, we need strong characters more than we need anything else, more than we need name or fame or outer glamour. We need those who can give us the counsel which will help us to keep our balance and not give way to panic. The spirit of panic, fear, weakness, always does damage. It opens the avenue for accident. Almost every day we see this illustrated. The rumour of fire in a theatre causes people to tumble all over one another. Perhaps there is no fire or it is easily put out, but at the time it has done its damage. Evil reports, false predictions, or even what we call a real situation, all can be minimized through our inner strength, but this inner strength is nothing that anybody can buy in the market-place or acquire by cleverness. It is acquired by one definite method only, and that is by going within.

How deep-rooted are we? Let us ask ourselves this. Let us take time for thought. In the early days of my work here, whenever I spoke of deeper things, such as meditation

or spiritual practice, business men would say: "That is all very well for you who come from a land where there is leisure. Here we do not have the time to think." It is very dangerous when you have no time for thinking. One of the things which is depleting the strength of man is that he wants everything done for him, all the calculations made by someone else. No doubt there are those who wish that a machine might be invented to do their thinking for them. We are, however, individuals and we must not sacrifice our individual birthright, for it is given to us by the Hand of Divinity. No matter how clever another may be, your particular case cannot fit into his mind, nor his mind into yours. Therefore manifest the Divine Principle which is within you.

Man has the power, the capacity to think right and through his right thinking to make everything right. We never overcome our weaknesses by dwelling on them. It is through the thought of strength and by learning to do things which are strong and fitting to our life and character that we cast out weakening influences. Sri Ramakrishna, the great spiritual Master, in his naïve way evolved some very interesting methods. He said: "Let a man not dwell on the idea of sin. If you feel you have done something wrong, correct it, but not by concentrating upon it, not by saying: 'I am evil; I am a sinner!' for if you keep thinking that way you will become one." What he says is true. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." It is natural when there is some frailty in us for us to recognize it, but we must overcome it by its opposite. Let us think strengthening thoughts. No man ever became strong by dwelling on weakness.

"The strength of my life art Thou:

The vigor of my spirit is ever in Thee!"

These lines from one of my poems have come to my mind. "The strength of my life art Thou!" Here is where we

should place our trust. You may say: "That is a dream; it is only a vision." These things, however, which we set apart as ethereal idealisms, not practical in our life, become our support in days of struggle, when the sky is threatening. Twenty-five years ago when people said they did not have time for deeper thinking, I wondered what they meant. Any man who wants to amount to anything, who desires to be a support to his people, to his family, or who wishes to be a vital influence in the lives of the young, must take the time. He cannot afford to yield to weakness. He must learn to draw upon the Source of his being. What inspiration it should bring us to know that we have this responsibility, that we possess this heritage, not through our muscular strength or mental calculation, but that from our very birth we possess it.

Here you may bring forward what may seem like a perfectly logical argument. If we all possess this great heritage then why do we have to worry about it? We all possess it, but there are many who carry it unconsciously, like a person who has inherited a large fortune and does not know it. There have been such cases. Perhaps because of a quarrel with his father or mother or some member of his family, a man wanders away from home, goes without leaving any address. Then someone dies and leaves him a fortune, but naturally he is not aware of it; he has broken his connection. Same way with us. We wander away from the centre of our being and lose our connection with it. We are living too much on the surface, and surface life, no matter how well we may plan it, can never give us either satisfaction or the strength which is abiding.

You may say, "What you tell us is nothing new." Who wants to tell anything new? Truth is one. If I have the opportunity and privilege of conducting Services for the

next twenty-five or fifty years I shall keep on saying these same things. Have you exhausted all that you have known in this one life? Have you even tried? Some years ago in this country there was a Christian convention. Many prominent people came and naturally discussed different aspects of Christianity. One man arose and said that Christianity had been a failure, at which another replied, "How can it be a failure when it has never been tried?" All the beautiful precepts and teachings which we feel that we know so well, have we ever really put them into practice? You say to a child, "You must never lose your temper." But how is he going to find the way by which he may control it unless you show him the way. Even children who are too little to understand a word of what you speak, know the sound of your voice and catch the meaning. They are great imitators; and this is what I mean when I say that herein lies our responsibility. The idea of responsibility, however, need not imply anything arduous; it is a privilege and can be a pleasure. You love the adoration that comes from a child. He likes to give it to you and you like to deserve it. You want to appear clean and sweet and beautiful and strong. Therefore you cannot lead a life of pretense, because you never know in what hour you may be taken unaware.

Strong people are strong always. It is not a question of make-believe, merely affirming, "I am very strong!" when you feel just the opposite, or saying, "I am not afraid at all!" when you are filled with fear. It is that you really feel secure because you have placed your trust in something which is invincible. There is nothing that can make us do this, just as there is no one who can force love in our heart. Out of our own volition, out of our own soul, out of our own spirit, out of our own yearning we choose our ideal, therefore we cherish it. By constantly dwelling upon it, we

foster it and thus live so close to it that before we know it we become like unto it.

"The knower of the Absolute One, the knower of Truth, knower of God, becomes like unto Him." This marvelous thought comes to us through the Vedic Upanishad. God has no element of fear and so His devotee does not fear either; but the egotistic man who relies on his own little strength and is always ready to fight to preserve his dignity, he fears because he is on unstable ground.

In the religious expressions of mankind there may be differences of creed and dogma and in the performance of ritual, but the fundamental thoughts strike only one chord which produces in the world of life a rhythmic harmony, strong and vibrant. Man's root is deep down in Divinity. There are no two opinions about that. A spiritual man, whenever and wherever he may arise, whether in China, Japan, America, Egypt or India, seems to speak a language that is understood by every soul of the human race. There is no difference in this language of soul-consciousness; it is potent because it is of God, and it penetrates everywhere. It is the only means by which we can grasp the significance of life and convey it to others. Let us, therefore, learn to speak and understand the language of the soul.

The spirit, the vital part of man, is like a spring of clear water. A good spring even in a bad year does not grow less. It is so deep down that the weather conditions do not affect it. So man's inner nature, fed by the life of God, of Truth, of spiritual Reality is nourished, is kept intact even in times of depression and suffering. Is it not wonderful when we find a man who is not unsettled by outer conditions, but who has become strong through the strength of God! One who smiles, not because the sun is shining or because he feels buoyant on that particular day or has just had good

news, but because the smile on his lips is the smile of heaven—placed there by the Hand of God. Do not think that I am merely expressing a poetic fancy. These are the things which can make us truly human, and only when we are truly human can we claim that we are children of Divinity and not just mortal children who fight and quarrel and dispute over petty details and forget our Divine heritage.

Why are we this way? Why is there all this chaos? To-day there is not one single thinking mind anywhere that is not at least sometimes reflecting on these problems. Our mind goes round and round trying to solve them, but there seems to be something we have not taken into account. I have listened to men who are experts along business and economic lines, and they admit that it is a great puzzle. Our banks are filled with reserve and yet there is poverty, there is privation, there is a vacuum. One does not have to be a spiritual giant to realize this fact.

What is it man can do to remedy these conditions? We may give to a poor man out of the compassion of our heart, but his own tendencies and inclinations will prevail, and no matter what we do, he will interpret in his own way the opportunities that come to him. I remember once when I was crossing the Atlantic by the southern route, there was a great deal of discussion about the steerage passengers. Some people asked the Captain why he did not give them better accommodations. He smiled and said: "Nobody would like to better their conditions more than I. I tried to do so, to give them a higher standard, but they could not maintain it; they seemed to be happier in their own atmosphere." This particular illustration may not appeal to you, I have given it merely to point out the fact that we always create our own environment. We may find fault with the world, with God, with humanity, but the real

fault lies within our own selves. The strong men always go forward; they have no time or moment to quarrel with any one, to give excuses for anything. So I repeat what Carlyle says: "The block of granite which was an obstacle in the path of the weak becomes a stepping-stone in the path of the strong."

Suppose we take that literally and apply it to our present difficulties. This depression—the handicaps, the encumbrances which are weighing upon us—perhaps it is the very thing which will bring out vital issues from our life and fire our heart with new consciousness. It may even give us those very elements of thought which will enable us to overcome our obstacles, and tomorrow we may be very glad that we endured them. I often look upon the struggles I have gone through as my greatest blessings, and I think every truly thoughtful person can say the same thing. The hours of trial are the hours which make us strong, and if we are not absolutely deaf to the voice which speaks from within, we know that those hours have their significance. Leonardo da Vinci puts it all in a little parable: The flint struck the steel and the steel said, "Why do you do this to me? What harm have I done to you that you strike me?" The flint replied, "Be patient for a moment, my friend," and he struck again and through their mutual endurance they gave birth to fire, that great element which gives heat and light to the world and cooks the food through which we derive our nourishment. If the flint and steel had been discouraged and thought only of possible surface harm to themselves, there might not have been any fire. Thus hard conditions may be for you like a little bit of flint striking upon you to ignite the fire of real life. What a blessing if years hence you can look back and say, "I thank God that these things came to me! They have transformed me. Through them I am renewed, revived and made strong."

Strength overcomes all weakness, strength of God! That indwelling Power deep down within our soul, who can take that away from us? No one has any monopoly over it, no one can hinder us there. So whenever we say, "I am disturbed, I am unhappy," or, "My life is spoiled by somebody!" let us look within and get our bearing and balance. We are strong by nature. Every time we think of our Divine heritage our life expands and we fear nothing, but if we forget it, we grow full of selfish instinct and that makes us full of fear. More and more we revolve in these thoughts and dwell in this consciousness, more and more our entire life becomes undermined. That is why so many people find it a hardship to lift their heads and declare their Divine birthright—they have weakened their own foundations. But what of that? What has been done can be undone. It requires a little patience, that is all. The thing is to keep on trying and not to give up merely because at the outset you have failed. Greater strength will come to you. The block of granite which stands now like an obstacle will become a stepping-stone. Let us make everything stepping-stones; let us go higher and higher, always remembering that we never can succeed merely depending on our own cleverness and shrewdness or even on our physical strength.

Some people do not believe in God. They rely too much on their own healthy bodies. A healthy body is a great asset, but it need not encourage one or an unhealthy body discourage one. The spirit within is potent, it is immortal, it is part of God. Therefore in order that we may find our contact with That which sufficeth in every hour, we must take time, make opportunities for reflection and meditation: we must sit alone with that One who is the foundation of our life.

We are all children of God. We all believe in Him; we

call Him Almighty, Infinite, Allwise, Omnipotent—we think of Him as loving and compassionate. Beautiful attributes! And these attributes we should realize to such an extent that gradually they will sink into our soul, into our mind, and even into our body, making us vibrant channels of Divine expression.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

—*Psalms.*

There is an inmost centre in us all,
Where truth abides in fullness.

—*Browning.*

By my love and my hope I beseech thee, throw not away the hero in thy soul, keep holy thy highest hope.

—*Nietzsche.*

The perfecting of life is a power residing in the soul.

—*Marcus Aurelius.*

The guarding of what is soft and tender is the secret of strength. . . . The softest things in the world do overcome the hardest. . . . There is nothing in the world more soft and weak than water, yet for attacking what is hard and strong nothing can surpass, nay equal it.

—*Lao Tze.*

Man's wisdom is to seek
his strength in God alone;
And even an angel would be weak
who trusted in his own.

—*Cowper.*

It makes us strong to think on Thine Eternity.

—*Faber.*

Shall I abuse this consecrated gift of strength?

—*Milton.*

CONSCIENCE AND CHARACTER

By Sister Devamata

There is something in our consciousness that acts like a high place in the road—it gives us a jolt every time we pass over it. It prods us to action and again it holds us back. It troubles our peace and disturbs our sleep, yet it brings great peace and induces sound sleep. The world calls it conscience; but that is but lending it a name, it does not tell us what it is. What is it?

It cannot be the body, because it disciplines the body; it is not the mind because it regulates the mind; nor can it be the moral sense since it governs all ethical action. It cannot be the ego, for it is at perpetual war with ego; and it is not the character because it stabilizes character and provides it a firm base. What is it then? What is its place in the human organism?

Conscience is as much of man's higher or soul-nature as he has made acquaintance with. If we can picture an overcast sky with a rift in it through which a shaft of light pierces, that shining rift represents the conscience. As the rift widens, the moral standard lifts and the demands of conscience grow louder. Behind that veil of cloud lies a limitless clear sky; beyond the greyness a great sun is shining. When the rift has lost itself in space and that sun's light shines unimpeded, conscience turns to vision; mind and moral sense are flooded with illumination; and the character becomes unassailable.

Every human being possesses a higher nature, every human being has a conscience—however leaden the sky, however dense the clouds, the rift is always there with its beam of light, giving promise of shining heavens behind. We have only to read the records of crime to find proof of this. There is something besides the law that the criminal flies from;

something that haunts him by day and by night and leads him to declare that wrongdoing does not pay. Conscience cannot be killed or silenced. Man cannot ignore or destroy the foundation of his being, his soul. It is indestructible and will not be suppressed. Its voice may sound faint and far, but ever it calls. Even the most degraded of human society perforce hears and in shame slinks into the shadow.

To say of a man that he is dual is regarded as an offense, yet all men are dual;—they manifest in two spheres of activity, known commonly as lower and higher nature. Sometimes they seek expression in one, sometimes in the other and this accounts for the inconsistencies and contradictions evident in their actions. It is not that they deny their previous standpoint. It is merely that they have moved to the other plane and their character is not sufficiently co-ordinated to join the two into a consistent harmony. This does not apply to the petty inconsistencies due wholly to whim and capricious self-will, but to those larger inconsistencies of genius and of big minds and hearts. Men of more heroic stature do not misrepresent themselves in such inconsistencies; they represent only one part of their being.

In speaking of higher and lower nature we must guard against attaching a locational or an ethical significance to the terms. Lower does not mean reprobate. There are men and women who lead the noblest, most admirable lives yet their consciousness has not awakened on the spiritual plane. They are wholly unaware of the great realm of Spirit and its language sounds to them visionary and abnormal. Their higher nature is unexplored except as they touch it through the conscience. Virtue, not vision, is their aim. People of this type are most often rigid and unbending. They listen obediently to conscience but they interpret its dictates according to preconceived ideas of a self-made ethical code.

Conscience governs their coming and going but it makes them more Puritan than saint. This is the natural outcome of a purely ethical standard. One feels in it the lack of the softening touch of Spirit.

The lower nature does not carry all the way. It is the lesser part of man. It includes the physical body, the senses, the mind, the intellect, the moral sense, and the sense of me and mine or the ego. It is the portion of man that grows, evolves, changes, is born and dies; whereas the higher or soul-nature is birthless, deathless, unchanging. The lower nature is heterogeneous, multiple, frequently at war with itself. The higher nature is homogeneous and one only, hence ever peaceful.

Geographically one pictures the lower nature as the base and the higher nature as the crown; in reality, however, the higher nature is both base and crown. It is that on which man's being rests, its foundation and support. It is also the highest point towards which all his effort tends. The lower nature is the channel of expression through which the higher nature reaches the outer world. That which joins them is the conscience.

Our spiritual unfoldment takes place spontaneously as conscience expands, and discloses more and more of our higher nature. When the higher or soul-nature is fully manifest, the purpose of all evolution has been attained and conscience having accomplished its mission becomes merged in its source. Along the way to this ultimate goal we pass through two stages. In the first stage, conscience is on one side and we are on the other. Everything that happens seems to create an issue between us. Conscience interferes with our play and interrupts our work; it is an unceasing annoyance and we do our best to eliminate it, but it keeps steadily on with unperturbed persistence reminding us of the higher laws of our being.

Gradually it breaks down our opposition and wins us. Then we pass to the second stage of our spiritual evolution, in which we are on the side of conscience and our higher nature and struggling to subdue our lower nature. We long to express that which is lofty and noble in us, but constantly we are trapped and overcome by old habits and tendencies. This period of our unfoldment requires greater patience with ourselves. We are eager to press forward and escape from the trammels of the little self, but it still entangles and pulls us back.

We must not be disheartened. We are fighting a winning battle. We are on the side that cannot fail to gain the victory. Nothing can withstand the power of Spirit. If we are brave and fervent and hold fast, all the odds are on our side. Conscience and character allied with Spirit are sure to conquer.

POWER THROUGH SACRIFICE

Compiled from the letters of the Swami Vivekananda

(Written from America to his disciples and spiritual brothers in India from 1894 to 1895.)

Great things can be done by great sacrifices only. No selfishness, no name, no fame, yours or mine, nor my Master's even! Stop not to look back for name or fame or any such nonsense. Throw self overboard and work. Remember, "The grass when made into a rope by being joined together can even chain a mad elephant." The Lord's blessing on you all! His power be in you all—as I believe it is *already*. "Wake up, stop not until the goal is reached," say the Vedas. Up, up! the long night is passing, the day is approaching, the wave has risen, nothing will be able to resist its tidal fury. The spirit, my boys, the spirit! The love, my children, the love! the faith, the belief; and fear not! The greatest sin is fear.

Do not be proud; do not insist upon anything dogmatic; do not go against anything—ours is to put chemicals together, the Lord knows how and when the crystal will form. Above all, be not inflated with my success or yours. Great works are to be done. What is this small success in comparison to what is to come? Believe, believe, the decree has gone forth—India must rise, the masses and the poor are to be made happy. Rejoice! . . . The flood of spirituality has risen. I see it is rolling over the land resistless, boundless, all-absorbing. Every man to the fore, every good will be added to its forces, every hand will smooth its way, and glory be unto the Lord!

Be courageous. Do not try to lead your brethren, but serve them. The brutal mania for leading has sunk many a great ship in the waters of life. Take care especially of that, i.e., be unselfish even unto death, and work.

Beware of falsehood. Go to work, my boys, the fire will come to you! The great secret is—absence of jealousy. Be always ready to concede to the opinions of your brethren, and try always to conciliate. That is the whole secret. Fight on bravely! Life is short! Give it up to a great cause. Work, work—conquer all by your love! Love makes no distinction between man and man, between an Aryan and a Mlechchha (untouchable), between a Brahman or a Pariah, nor even between a man or a woman. Love makes the whole universe as one's own home.

Nothing will be able to resist truth and love and sincerity. Are you sincere? unselfish even unto death? and loving? Then fear not, not even death. Onward, my lads! The whole world requires Light. It is expectant. India alone has that Light, not in magic mummeries and charlatanism, but in the teaching of the glories of the spirit of real religion—of the highest spiritual truth. That is why the Lord

has preserved the race through all its vicissitudes unto the present day. Now the time has come.

If you are really my children you will fear nothing, stop at nothing. You will be like lions. We must rouse India and the whole world. No cowardice. I will take no nay. Do you understand? Be true unto death! Work in harmony. Be patient with everybody. Expand your hearts and hopes as wide as the world. In future do not pay any heed to what people say either for or against you or me. Work on, be lions and the Lord will bless you. I shall work incessantly until I die, and even after death I shall work for the good of the world. Truth is infinitely more weighty than untruth; so is goodness. If you possess these, they will make their way by sheer gravity. Love never fails, my son; today or tomorrow or ages after, truth will conquer. Love shall win the victory. Do you love your fellow-men? Where should you go to seek for God—are not all the poor, the miserable, the weak, Gods? Why not worship them first? Why go to dig a well on the shores of the Ganges? Believe in the omnipotent power of love. Who cares for these tinsel puffs of name? Even idiots may stand up to hear themselves praised, and cowards assume the attitude of the brave, when everything is sure to turn out well, but the true hero works in silence. How many Buddhas die before one finds expression! My son, I believe in God and I believe in man. I believe in helping the miserable, I believe in going even to hell to save others. Talk of the Westerners, they have given me food, shelter, friendship, protection—even the most orthodox Christians! No man, no nation, my son, can hate others and live.

I like to work on calmly and silently, and the Lord is always with me. Follow me, if you will, by being intensely sincere, perfectly unselfish, and, above all, by being perfectly

pure. My blessings go with you. In this short life there is no time for the exchange of compliments.

There is too much talk, talk, talk! We are great, we are great! Nonsense! We are imbeciles; that is what we are! This hankering after name and fame and all other humbugs—what are they to me? What do I care about them? I should like to see hundreds coming to the Lord! Where are they? I want them, I want to see them. You must seek them out. You only give me name and fame. Have done with name and fame; to work, my brave men, to work! You have not caught my fire yet—you do not understand me! You run in the old ruts of sloth and enjoyments. Down with all sloth, down with all enjoyments here or hereafter. Plunge into the fire and bring the people towards the Lord.

That you may catch my fire, that you may be intensely sincere, that you may die the hero's death on the field of battle—is the constant prayer of Vivekananda.

Accept the sacrifice of my confessions from the ministry of my tongue, which Thou hast formed and aroused to confess unto Thy Name. . . . Let my soul praise Thee, that it may love Thee; and let it confess unto Thee Thy mercy, that it may praise Thee. Thy whole creation ceaseth not nor is silent in Thy praise: neither the spirit of man with speech directed unto Thee; nor things animate nor inanimate by the mouth of them that meditate thereon: that so our souls may from their weariness arise toward Thee, and leaning on those things which Thou hast made, pass to Thyself who madest all wonderfully; and in whom is refreshment and true strength.

—*St. Augustine.*

As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

—*St. Paul.*

THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE

Told by Gayatri Devi

(In accord with the promise made in the "Message of the East" for November, 1931, we give herewith another immortal legend of India, as recounted by Srimati Gayatri Devi, this time having to do with the life of Valmiki, inspired author of the Ramayana, one of the great epic poems of the world.—Editor's Note)

This came to pass one day in Baikuntha, the celestial kingdom above, when blessed Vishnu was reposing under Kalpataru, the tree that brings the fruition of all desires. The Lord suddenly wished to play His divine play, and gently, like the blossoming of a flower, He transformed His one incomparable form into four beautiful human beings.

While Narayana was thus lost in the joy of His magic game, transfiguring all corners with a splendor blinding to mortal eyes, Narada, His great devotee, came to Goloka, playing upon the Vina, and from a distance beheld this sight. The unearthly beauty of the four luminous figures overwhelmed Narada and his rapturous emotion moved him to tears. Never had he seen such a wonder!

The Sage plunged quietly into the stillness of his own heart and searched for a revelation which would explain the secret of the marvelous vision he had just seen, but failing to fathom the mystery of the Great God, he decided to go to Lord Shiva, the Omniscient, to whom all things are revealed in silence. On his way, he invited Brahma, the Creator, to accompany him. They journeyed to Mt. Kailash, the abode of God Shiva, who expressed gladness at their coming and spoke thus:

"O Narada, thy face shineth with divine radiance. Tell me—what maketh thee so happy and illumined today?"

Narada replied:

"O Mahadeva, no words can describe what I have witnessed in Baikuntha today. The Three Worlds know only

one Hari, one Narayana, but I have seen Him in four forms. Explain to me this mystery."

Shiva said:

"Thou hast seen a vision of the far distant future. Blessed Hari will incarnate on earth in these four human forms of which Rama will be the greatest. Such will be the power of the name of Rama that even the greatest of sinners, the wickedest of men will be redeemed by uttering his Holy Name."

Now Brahma laughed and said:

"O Nilakantha, will Mother-earth ever bear a son who will so greatly need salvation?"

Shiva replied:

"Even now, there dwells in the world a mighty villain. Go and give him Rama-nama (the Name of Rama) and thou wilt transform his life. Then wilt thou understand the glory of the Master of Miracles."

Brahma and Narada were not fully convinced of what All-seeing Shiva had said, yet desiring to satisfy their curiosity, they came down to the realm of mortals.

At that time, there lived a notorious robber, Ratnakara, whose name signifies the treasure-house of gems, but in reality he was a store-house of all vices.

It was Ratnakara's habit to watch by the roadside with clubs and weapons and rob the travelers by his threats; neither did he hesitate to commit murder in broad daylight.

This day when Brahma and Narada came to earth in the disguise of Sannyasins, Ratnakara had found no one to prey upon. He was pacing restlessly up and down in a deserted woodland and finally climbed a tree to see if anyone were coming his way. In the distance he saw dimly the figures of Narada and Brahma approaching the forest. He waited in cruel glee while the two came on, singing the praise of God.

Ratnakara fell upon them like a wolf and demanded their belongings.

Brahma spoke:

"Who art thou who darest maltreat men of God? Dost thou not see we are Sannyasins?"

Ratnakara laughed aloud, and said mockingly:

"I have killed thousands of Sadhus like yourselves. Ratnakara is my name. The whole world is afraid of me. Give me thy cloth!"

So saying, he raised his iron club and was about to strike Brahma on the head. The Creator silently cast upon him His godly spell and the club fell from the robber's hand to the ground.

Then Brahma said:

"Tell me, Ratnakara, why dost thou destroy harmless lives? Thou wilt achieve nothing by killing us who are penniless wanderers. Art thou not afraid of the tortures of hell that will follow thy long accumulated misdeeds? Who will save thee from thy sins?"

The robber made no answer save to lift his club a second time, threateningly.

Fearlessly the Creator spoke to him again:

"Well then, My good brother, if thou wilt take My life, let us go to a place where My death will cause no harm to any living creature. If I fall here on this soil, millions of ants will die being crushed by My body. My doctrine of love forbids such violence."

Ratnakara looked at him amazed, and Brahma gladly noticed the change in the expression of the murderer's face and dared speak again:

"Ratnakara, for whom dost thou commit these wrongs? Who enjoyeth thy bloody wealth? Is there any one in the world who will carry thy burden of sin with thee? Answer me!"

Ratnakara now became thoughtful and bewildered. Seeing this, Brahma glanced at him compassionately and repeated His question.

The robber then said:

"I have a father, a mother and a wife, and whatsoever I earn I divide with them. They will no doubt share my fate whatever it may be."

Brahma smiled and nodded His head:

"No, my good man, no, thou art mistaken. Thy dear ones will not be punished for thy cruel actions. Thou alone shalt be doomed for thy life-long wickedness. If thou doubt-est My words, go and ask them."

Ratnakara felt more troubled than ever at these words of the Creator but he endeavored to shake off his fear, saying:

"Thou art indeed clever. When I go away, thou wilt escape. Come! Give me thy bundle!"

Brahma said:

"No, I will not run away. If thou canst not trust Me, then tie us both to this tree and go and ask those who partake of thy blood-stained loot and come back and tell me if they will bear with thee thy load of guilt."

Ratnakara was now compelled to go away as one spell-bound, unable to resist the mysterious power of Brahma. First he approached his old father and said to him:

"Thou knowest well, dear father, that I earn my bread by murder and robbery and bring to thee and mother the fruit of my wicked deeds. The bark of my life is heavily laden with countless sins. Wilt thou share thy son's struggles when the iron rod of justice beats upon him mercilessly?"

The father became profoundly indignant and spoke in this manner:

"Who told thee, O shameless one, that I should be respon-

sible for thy unrighteous and brutal acts? Son, when thou wert young, it was my duty to maintain thee until thou hadst reached manhood, and now it is thy privilege to provide for thy old father. I know not what vile means thou hast sought to fulfill thy obligations. O, Ratnakara, none but thou and thou alone must pay the penalty for thy vicious and unforgivable crimes."

Suddenly an uncontrollable fear overpowered Ratnakara's senses. Helplessly, he ran to his mother and said to her piteously:

"O mother, thou wilt never forsake thy son when the fires of damnation overtake him. Tell me—wilt thou not protect thy Rathnakara against his doom?"

Tears glittered in the mother's tender eyes as she addressed her unworthy son:

"O Ratnakara, how canst thou ask me such a question? I have been wounded beyond measure by thy disgraceful and cruel ways and have often wished I had never brought thee into life. My son, thou must redeem thyself from thy impending and unavoidable misery. My heart will ever bleed for thee, but I can give thee no help."

Now Ratnakara's only hope lay in his wife. Passionately, he spoke to her:

"O my wife, my life's companion, thou hast always equally shared my joys and sorrows, struggles and victory. Wilt thou not uphold me with thy unchanging love when I am thrown into the realms of darkness?"

The wife, deeply grieved, said hesitatingly:

"Forgive me, dear husband, if my words cause thee pain. I shall ever partake of thy life's fruit and failure and bring thee my love unceasingly, but the sins thou hast incurred to maintain me can never be mine, as thou didst vow to support and protect me until the journey of this world is ended."

Ratnakara was now caught in a whirlpool of violent terror and, as the picture of a horrible future flashed through his mind, maddening agony drove him to repentance. In frenzied remorse and unutterable despair, he broke down like a tree uprooted by a fierce storm, and wept and sobbed bitterly. Where could he go? Who would befriend him in his moments of agony?

Suddenly, there arose before him the benign faces of the holy men whom he had abused, and in their eyes, tender with pity, he found a ray of courage and relief.

Breathlessly, he ran back to the forest where Brahma and Narada tied to a tree, had long awaited his return. Ratnakara fell prostrate at their feet and begged for their mercy.

Brahma said:

"Be brave, my son! Through the grace of the Lord, thou shalt be saved. Go to yonder lake and bathe in its sacred waters and I shall give the Name which, like fire, will consume all thy iniquities to ashes." Ratnakara eagerly walked to the beautiful Sarovara, but so great was his impurity that, at sight of him, the lake became dry. The sinner's pride now turned to tears and he returned to Brahma and Narada, sad-hearted and humble.

The Creator then sprinkled on his head water from His own Kamandalu,* and bade him repeat the Name of "Rama."

Alas! Ratnakara's tongue was so defiled with profane and vile utterances that it became numb and unable to speak the Holy Word. Ratnakara hopefully tried again and again to say it, but his efforts were fruitless.

Brahma felt an impelling pity as He observed the wretched plight of the unfortunate man. Finally, an idea occurred to Him and He asked Ratnakara to utter over and over again, "Mara! Mara! Mara!" which is the reverse of "Rama! Rama! Rama!"

*A container of holy water for worship.

Ratnakara repeated this word many times in swift succession, and, as it fell from his lips, naturally the syllables righted themselves and, to his great peace, he found himself pronouncing "Rama" as Brahma had first whispered it into his ears.

The task of Brahma and Narada was accomplished and they turned their faces toward heaven, marveling at the transforming power of the Name. From that moment, the life-stream of Ratnakara changed its course and started in a new path that led him higher and higher. The murderer discarded his guilt-bearing vocation like an old garb and remained in seclusion, breathing day and night, with increasing faith and fervor, the Blessed Name.

Time heeds neither the sinner nor the saint, so it moved on rapidly for many, many years. Ratnakara never left his post of prayer, and his whole being, quickened by devotion, burned in the passion of the Supreme Word, and became sinless and holy.

Millions of little ants devoured his body and built around him their dwelling place and buried him in their mount. But the robber, transported into a world where the external finds no access, knew nothing of the life around him. The frightful memories of his infamous life were wiped away from the face of the earth, and Ratnakara died to all mortals forever. Brahma, however, did not forget the once wicked man.

One day, He quietly came down to the same woods to find Ratnakara, but saw no trace of any human being, only heard a resonant voice chanting, "Rama! Rama! Rama!" The pure atmosphere of the place spoke to Him through its eloquent silence, and eagerly He searched for the soul who had created such sanctity. Following the sound, he came to the ant-hill and knew that Ratnakara was hidden in its depths.

Immediately, He commanded Purandura, the controller of the clouds, to send forth rain. Then, for seven days and nights, heavy showers fell, melting away the mount—and so Ratnakara was delivered from the weight of the earth as he had once been saved from the load of his sin.

Brahma glanced lovingly at the redeemed robber's wasted body, now transparent with an inner light, and gently touched him who was still rapturously drinking the nectar of the Name and was unconscious of any outer change.

Ratnakara opened his eyes and the sight of Brahma stirred deep emotion in his heart. Humbly, he fell at the Creator's feet and cried: "O my Saviour, Thou hast rescued this poor life from drowning. How can I express my gratitude for Thy great compassion?"

Brahma said:

"Arise, O Ratnakara, thou art indeed great. The fame of thy faith will be carried to the remotest quarters of the world and mortals will call thee a Blessed Saint. Valmiki is thy new name, as thou hast dwelt in Valmik, the ant-hill, so long. I have brought thee tidings which will make thy heart glad. O noble conqueror of sins, all thy penance was to prepare thee for a worthy mission. Hear of this from me! Presently, Lord Vishnu will incarnate on earth as Rama and thou shalt be the honored poet to weave in garlands of metre and rhyme his multiple life and its manifold glory. Thou art destined, O Ratnakara, to be immortal through ages and thy renown as a lyric composer will be unparalleled in the Three Worlds."

Ratnakara was dazed at such utterances of the Creator and spoke with simple humility:

"Sire, thou knowest I am an ignorant man and know nothing of poetry and rhythm. How then shall I accomplish such an impossible task?"

Brahma answered:

"Be not anxious, O Valmiki, when the hour is at hand, Goddess Saraswati will descend from heaven and place her throne in thy throat and thou shalt be the mouthpiece for her divine inspiration, and poetry will flow from thee in an unbroken stream." So saying, Brahma departed.

Now Valmiki made his home in the wilderness and there lived a life constantly sheltered in the sanctuary of his soul. Time became his captive as he bound its restless hands with the unbreakable chains of Rama's Name, and filled his hours with sweet ecstasy.

One day, when he was sitting under a tree on the shore of a lake, repeating the Word, two birds nestled on a branch and mated happily. Suddenly, flying through space, came an arrow and struck cruelly one of the little sky-travelers. The helpless creature fell into the lap of Valmiki dead, while its little bereft mate moaned and cried in a heart-rending tone.

At this episode, Valmiki's whole being was seized with a pain he had never before experienced, and, in the furnace of his anguished soul, melted the golden notes of poetry, immortal in history. Valmiki heard his own voice uttering these words, as if in a dream:

"O thou cruel hunter, thou shalt never attain the Highest, as thou hast caused such grief to a living thing."

The sage picked up a twig and with it wrote on a dry leaf this verse, the spontaneous outburst of his feelings. Then he bowed down and worshipped the Goddess of Rhythm, for he knew that the spirit of Saraswati was upon him and it was Her grace that had worked the miracle.

Thus the bud of Valmiki's genius opened its petals and flowered into Ramayana* in time to come. The peasants of

*The great epic of the life of Rama.

Hindustan and the laborer of Deccan all join their voices with the children of India and sing the Lila (play) of Rama, the Lord, and their melodious notes re-echo the sanctified and poetic heart-beat of the Great Saint, and vanish in the limitless spaces of the blue.

Our children's lives are moulded out of the clear glow of the sunlight and the simple faith of the mothers, so they know the secret of all miracles and mysteries.

Hush, O unbeliever, my child is dreaming! Withdraw thy sword of scepticism and doubt, and do not destroy the blossom of his dream.

A SPRING SONG

By Julia P. Dabney

How shall I sing?

I will sing as the birds do, full of the joy of life
When the sap is running and good old earth is rife

With every burgeoning thing.

When they lilt on the wing;

Then they spring—

A bubbling rapture—from tree to tree,

Filling the ethers with melody,—

Filling the world with praise.

Even so will I round out my days;

Even so will I be

A minstrel of gratitude, voicing the delicate stress
Of earth's infinite loveliness.

I will be of it part;

I will fling

My canticle further than theirs through the echoing skies,

To scatter broadcast as it flies

The measureless praise in my heart!

REPORT

Swami Paramananda returned to the Ananda-Ashrama on Friday, Feb. 12th, and the following Sunday celebrated the birthday anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. Unfortunately on that day a curtain of rain separated the Ashrama from the rest of the world, but in spite of the inclement conditions, the Temple of the Universal Spirit was generously filled both morning and afternoon with those who felt they could not miss hearing the Swami's tribute to one who is looked upon as a great spiritual awakener of the present age. Whenever before the Swami has spoken of his master, he has invoked the man himself, his living qualities—the fiery spirit, the lofty vision, the heart of compassion; and this time was no exception. Through the Swami's words, Swami Vivekananda lived again for those who heard them.

As usual, many stayed over for the afternoon Service, and at luncheon in the Guest House partook of special Indian dishes prepared by the Swami in honor of the event.

In contrast to the dark and threatening skies of this occasion, the public observance of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday, on Sunday March 13th, was marked by blue sky, sunshine and soft breezes. It was a perfect spring day and a large number responded to the vernal invitation, coming as though on pilgrimage to hear the Swami speak in the morning on "Sri Ramakrishna the Awakener," and in the afternoon on "Sri Ramakrishna's Silent and Holy Power."

"Sri Ramakrishna," the Swami said, "is like a golden thread through which we find contact with the Divine Mind. We need such golden threads, we need such lamps to shed their light, penetrating through fog and density of night, doubts, delusions and distortions. What Sri Ramakrishna brought in that period of chaos and materialism in which he lived was a very gigantic readjustment. He reestablished the supremacy of faith. He tried to instill into the hearts of men that not only was 'First seek ye the Kingdom of God' practical and possible, but it was the only thing to do; and he proved it by his own life."

Curries and khichuris from the Swami's own hand again proved a lure at the Ashrama Guest House for those who remained. All in all, it was a day full of rhythm, beauty and high inspiration.

Among those who shared in its spirit were two honored guests from far away—Mrs. Georgianna Tree West, head of the Louisville Truth Centre, and her friend Mrs. Kelley, both of whom are at the Ashrama for a two weeks' sojourn which will carry them over the Eastertide. The Swami so often has been the recipient of Mrs. West's gracious hospitality, that it was a pleasure for him to welcome her at his Pacific Coast retreat. Even on his last trip westward, he broke his journey at Louisville and gave several lectures and classes under the auspices of the Truth Centre, meeting with such warm response that arrangements were made for Srimati Gayatri Devi, his Boston assistant, to visit Louisville for a few days in the month of March, during Mrs. West's absence. Cincinnati, which gave the Swami hearty welcome for the few hours he was there, also urged Srimati's coming.

She arrived in Louisville March 12th and left on March 17th, spending one night in Cincinnati en route. In all, she gave nine lectures and from every hand has come glowing appreciation of the pure inspiration she brought as a true daughter of Mother India.

During her absence, the Services and Classes at the Vedanta Centre were in the able hands of Miss Katharine Sherwood who recently returned from a two years' sojourn in the Orient.

One other event has marked the Swami's present visit in California. On Monday morning, March 14th, he gave a devotional talk over radio station KNX on "Faith, Hope, Courage and Endurance," broadcasting his special greetings to those friends who, for illness or other unavoidable causes, are unable to attend the Ashrama Services.

The Swami expects to return to the Boston Centre immediately after Easter.

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"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."

—*Ezekiel*

"Light shall come again from the East."

—*Tyndall*

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IME is a milestone, a measure of man's faith, time is a true tester of our strength and tenacity. As this issue of the MESSAGE OF THE EAST is marked "A Quarter Century," it is fitting that a word be offered here to make plain its significance. Swami Paramananda first came on a visit to Boston in the April of 1907. Since then a quarter century has elapsed. Naturally the work has gone through many vicissitudes, as all undertakings are destined to go through the fire of trial. The Swami himself has frankly said that if any good has been achieved through his humble instrumentality, it is due to the loyalty and unfailing devotion of his many faithful friends. Above all he pays tribute to his Master, the great Swami Vivekananda, who attended the Parliament of Religions in 1893, thus blazing the trail for those who have followed him. It is he who ordained Swami Paramananda and set him on this path of consecration and service to God and humanity. Swami Vivekananda in his turn lays all his glory to his great Master, Sri Ramakrishna. Sri Ramakrishna takes nothing to himself and with his illumined humility proclaims, "Not I, not I, but Thou." Thus we witness the tradition of humility and dedication to God as it is handed down from one to the other. Here we find an absolute blending harmony of the immediate present to the age long past of glorious India and that of the whole world.

BE THOU GRACIOUS STILL

By Swami Paramananda

My soul, be thou gracious still!
In distress and pain
In sorrow and in anguish,
Be thou gracious still.
If perchance thou art slandered
And insults hurled upon thee,
Thy heart torn and bleeding,
Yet be not ungracious
Nor think harsh thoughts.
If proud world hurts thee
And man shuns thee,
Still be thou gracious in thy thought.

Remember, my soul,
Remember life within!
None can trespass on that hidden place.
Bring no thought or feeling there
That is void of peace.
Only beauty and grace
Must we have there.
We must keep grace and beauty
Like two altar lights
Ever burning
In that sacred shrine,
Else there will be no light.
No light will shine
In our sacred sanctuary,
And darkness will bring doubt, distress and fear.
I cannot live in doubt,
My soul, my friend!

Keep in light, then,
And be gracious still.
Nothing else matters.
Pain here is joy there;
Distress here is delight there;
Death here is Life there;
Insults endured here will be
Glory forever there.
Therefore be brave, be noble
In all thy thoughts, words and deeds
And be thou gracious still!

A THINKER'S CREED

By Associate Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes

(An excerpt from an Address given to his Harvard students many years ago. Mr. Holmes, the oldest man ever to sit on the Supreme Court of the United States, has just sent in his resignation at the age of ninety.)

No man has earned the right to intellectual ambition until he has learned to lay his course by a star which he has never seen—to dig by the divining rod for springs which he may never reach. . . .

To think great thoughts you must be heroes as well as idealists. Only when you have worked alone—when you have felt around you a black gulf of solitude more isolating than that which surrounds the dying man, and in hope and in despair have trusted to your own unshakable will—then only will you have achieved. Thus only can you gain the secret, isolated joy of the thinker, who knows that a hundred years after he is dead and forgotten, men who never heard of him will be moving to the measure of his thought—the subtle rapture of a postponed power, which the world knows not because it has no external trapping, but which to his prophetic vision is more real than that which commands an army.

MY MASTER

By Swami Vivekananda

(The following excerpt seems specially appropriate for this number as it contains a graphic portrayal of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna by his world-renowned disciple. Editor.)

We hear in the West about worshipping woman, but this is usually for her youth and beauty. This man meant by worshipping woman, that to him every woman's face was that of the Blissful Mother, and nothing but that. I myself have seen this man standing before those women whom society would not touch, and falling at their feet bathed in tears, saying: "Mother, in one form Thou art in the street, and in another form Thou art the universe. I salute Thee, Mother, I salute Thee." Think of the blessedness of that life from which all carnality has vanished, when every woman's face has become transfigured, and only the face of the Divine Mother, the Blissful One, the Protectress of the human race shines upon the man who can look upon every woman with that love and reverence! That is what we want.

This rigorous, unsullied purity came into the life of that man; all the struggles which we have in our lives were past for him. His hard-earned jewels of spirituality, for which he had given three-quarters of his life, were now ready to be given to humanity, and then began his mission. His teaching and preaching were peculiar, he would never take the position of a teacher. In our country a teacher is a most highly venerated person, he is regarded as God Himself. We have not even the same respect for our father and mother. Father and mother give us our body, but the teacher shows us the way to salvation. We are his children, we are born in the spiritual line of the teacher. All Hindus come to pay respect to an extraordinary teacher, they crowd around him. And

here was such a teacher, but the teacher had no thought whether he was to be respected or not, he had not the least idea that he was a great teacher, he thought that it was Mother who was doing everything and not he. He always said: "If any good comes from my lips, it is the Mother who speaks; what have I to do with it?" That was his one idea about his work, and to the day of his death he never gave it up. This man sought no one. His principle was, first form character, first earn spirituality, and results will come of themselves. His favorite illustration was, "When the lotus opens, the bees come of their own accord to seek the honey, so let the lotus of your character be full-blown and the results will follow." This is a great lesson to learn. My Master taught me this lesson hundreds of times, yet I often forget it. Few understand the power of thought. If a man goes into a cave, shuts himself in, and thinks one really great thought and dies, that thought will penetrate the adamant walls of that cave, vibrate through space, and at last penetrate the whole human race. Such is the power of thought; be in no hurry therefore to give your thoughts to others. First have something to give. He alone teaches who has something to give, for teaching is not talking, teaching is not imparting doctrines, it is communicating. Spirituality can be communicated just as really as I can give you a flower. This is true in the most literal sense. This idea is very old in India and finds illustration in the West in the belief, in the theory, of apostolic succession. Therefore, first make character—that is the highest duty you can perform. Know Truth for yourself, and there will be many to whom you can teach it afterwards; they will all come. This was the attitude of my Master—he criticised no one.

For years I lived with that man, but never did I hear those lips utter one word of condemnation for any sect. He

had the same sympathy for all of them; he had found the harmony between them. A man may be intellectual, or devotional, or mystic, or active, and the various religions represent one or the other of these types. Yet it is possible to combine all the four in one man, and this is what future humanity is going to do. That was his idea. He condemned no one, but saw the good in all.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Be content to work and above all be true to yourself. Be pure, staunch and sincere to the very backbone and everything will be all right. Onward! upon ages of struggle a character is built. Do not be discouraged.

—*Swami Vivekananda.*

Be thou patient then; . . . for God is with those who do well.

—*Mohammed.*

The more difficult a condition is the less we should take action. By such action we usually spoil the conditions that are beginning to be shaped to our best interests.

—*Tolstoy.*

I do oppose
My patience to his fury, and am armed
To suffer with a quietness of spirit
The very tyranny and rage of his.

—*Shakespeare.*

If thou journey on a road made by thy hands each day, thou wilt at last arrive at the place where thou wouldst be.

—*Maxims of Ani (Egyptian).*

Endurance is the crowning quality
And Patience all the passion of great hearts!

—*Lowell.*

KEY TO CONCENTRATION

By Swami Paramananda

The practice of concentration helps us to bring together all the loose fabrics of our mind and unite them into one definite unit. Our mind possesses an enormous quantity of material for thought. Often the mind of the unproductive individual is more filled with ideas than the one who is engaged in some definite line of action. The secret of success lies not in the abundance of thoughts that we are capable of holding in our minds, but in the ability to follow a well chosen subject to the exclusion of all others.

The fact is, we cannot do more than one thing at a time and do it well, but if we concentrate on that one thing wholly, we not only succeed in doing it well but we do it much more quickly and this saves our time and energy for the next task which lies before us.

Many people imagine that the practice of concentration is something in the nature of metaphysical abstraction, but it proves to be quite the contrary. At the very outset, we have to overcome all the visionary, dreamy, and restless tendencies of our mind, otherwise we cannot hope to derive any real benefit from the practice of concentration.

The well concentrated mind follows one line of thought at a time. This is very essential in every phase and department of human interest. The man who has gained, even in small measure, the power of concentration moves quietly with a sense of leisure, as if there were nothing else in the entire universe but that one task laid before him.

Concentration is a definite cure for all manner of mental disturbances, such as uneasiness, restlessness, worries and the attitude of self-depreciation. As we focus our mind definitely on a constructive principle, these ailments are crowded out of our system. While we are thus engaged in dynamic, ex-

hilarating thoughts, our body and mind revive in great measure their normal qualities, and as we repeat such practice till it becomes a habit, we establish ourselves in a state of physical health and mental alertness, which often takes its expression through buoyant optimism and high inspiration.

The most effectual mentality does not express itself through tenseness. Yet the average individual in the act of accomplishing something makes himself so rigid through tenseness that he comes almost to the breaking point. This is just the opposite of mental concentration. Right concentration makes us calm and collected and we emanate serene strength. Also our thoughts function most freely and can be focused with greater effectiveness when our body and mind are relaxed and tranquil.

Do not let us imagine, however, that the practice of concentration implies that we must dwell upon just one thing and do nothing else, even when we are tired and bored and unhappy through repeated unsuccessful efforts. A change of physical and mental occupation is necessary and beneficial. We come back to our task with fresh interest and vigor and naturally we are able to make greater progress.

One of the immediate results we obtain through the practice of concentration is that our mind grows more flexible. It is successful not only in its special line of activity but adapts itself with great ease to whatever may be placed before it, even something that is out of its accustomed line.

Concentration is not dependent upon how much time we spend but on how well we hold ourselves together. The whole secret of success lies in this, because as we are able to co-ordinate our body, our mind and all our scattered forces and succeed in making them as one, we realize in full measure our innate efficiency.

Do not be discouraged ever, while you are struggling

along the way. It is the greatest possible detriment to your progress, the worst obstacle you can create to block your path.

The practice of holding to one subject is the real key to concentration. Patanjali, the Father of the Yoga system, advocates this, and wherever we see its practical fruition, we find that this method is applied. It is the one eternal principle in mental control, but we ourselves must choose the subject. The responsibility is ours.

CHOICE OF SUBJECTS

The right subject helps immensely; it builds up our life and aids us to climb the ladder of true success, step by step, making our body well, our nervous system calm and our mind keen and collected.

Wrong concentration, also, may bring us a moment of satisfaction through the gratification of our lower desires, but in the end it leads to the demoralization of our entire system; for wrong doing can never earn for us the right to happiness.

By wrong concentration, I mean when people deliberately focus their mental energy to harm someone. Although temporarily they may be successful in their ill use of this great power, eventually they not only lose it but it reacts on them. "He whose mind is not tranquil, he can have neither peace nor happiness."

Give your attention to the smallest of tasks, it is the best way to build up your habit of concentration. There is nothing really insignificant for any man or woman. A small task well done will give us the right to do a bigger one better. It is an excellent slogan to carry in our mind that there is nothing insignificant anywhere.

Never be in a hurry. Learn to be poised and thoughtful if you want to gain the power of concentration.

The practice of concentration helps us to organize the chaotic elements in our body and mind, and, as a result, we almost immediately gain a sense of strength: our body feels well, strong and light and our mind gains great keenness of perception. Also it gains in its ability to pursue higher thoughts and ideals, thus this practice proves to be the only key to true knowledge.

NEGATIVE CONCENTRATION

It may sound strange and incongruous to say that concentration can ever be negative and that in a certain state of our mental attitude this works quite unconsciously, bringing a most depleting effect upon both our body and mind.

Usually, we understand by concentration something that is strong, potent and vibrant, but if our mind forms a habit of dwelling upon what is morbid or of no consequence, which happens with any individual who indulges in brooding or self-pity, gradually we develop wrong concentration. Every human being has the faculty of concentration, but every human being has not acquired the power of directing the mind through the right channel or toward that which is creative, constructive and helpful. It is an art which we have to learn by degrees. Often, quite unconsciously, we concentrate upon something that is detrimental. Violent emotion—anger or hatred, for instance—will focus the mind upon a person or an idea hurtful to ourselves and to others. Also we focus the mind through worry. This cannot be called concentration, yet it does cause the mind to go round and round a thought or an object in a negative and destructive way. This negative concentration instead of giving us any benefit, weakens us and often causes an acute form of melancholia. All such forms of mental disorder can be counteracted and cured by means of positive concentration (by repeatedly turning the mind back into the proper channels).

In fact, real concentration should always be understood in terms of definiteness and positiveness.

When the mind is concentrated on any subject which stands for vitality, energy, action or spiritual poise, it connects us, as it were, with the reservoir of all these wonderful spiritual attributes. More and more as we succeed in keeping an unbroken contact with these forces, more and more we shall partake of their qualities.

Thus, by concentration, we can unite our consciousness with all things, from the smallest to the biggest, from the minutest to the highest; and it is truly said by the Yogi, "Through the mastery of concentration one gains access everywhere, from the atom to the Infinite."

THE LAWS OF THOUGHT

By Aurobindo Ghose

Thought builds the universe. There is such a thing as the conscious holding of a thought. When this is done, all that opposes it, or seems contradictory to it, gradually melts away and we wonder what has become of it, or why we were at one time under its illusion.

Anything may be achieved by thought. Death, disease, poverty, humiliation, any or all of these may be overcome. The one thought, "I am the strong! I am the strong!" earnestly held, calmly, confidently, unwaveringly and yet silently asserted, is enough. In the presence of one strong thought, all of a contrary opinion or partly so become apologetic and seek to defend themselves, or to explain why they cannot quite agree.

Immense batteries may be made by numbers of people uniting together to think a given thought. If a group of men and women could agree to give, say ten minutes every evening at the oncoming of darkness, to thinking a single

thought, "We are one; we are one! nothing can prevail against us to make us think we are divided. For we are one. The East and West are one and all antagonisms amongst us are illusion," the power that would be generated can hardly be measured.

This force ought always to be used in constructive forms. We ought always to devote it to what are called positive ends. We should never use it for hatred or jealousy or anger, but always in love and faith, and for the upbuilding of something. Even when evil is to be destroyed or a lie overcome, we must think of the truth that is to be revealed or the good to be done, and not the evil or falsehood.

The use of mental powers for directly destructive ends has always been regarded as accursed. It is what the West calls black magic, and certainly recoils upon the user in very terrible ways. A large beneficence should distinguish the man who knows the power of his own thought. He should not, indeed, assert two conflicting goods at the same time. But out of all that is possible, he should select that which, for reasons that he apprehends, is most admirable and desirable, and concentrate upon it. As this emerges into facts, he will find that all that opposes it is automatically banished and destroyed. The confusion of wishing this and that in opposite directions is the ordinary way of the ordinary world. This way represents a clearing and rationalizing of the ground, it means a dealing scientifically with our own desires in such a way as to make them realizable by the world.

The less selfish the thing we wish for, the greater and keener will be the accumulated and multiplied power of our thought battery. Our thought must be clear and ordered. When this is done, we shall see, to our surprise, that it has become creative. The world without begins to reflect the world within. Men and women become incarnated ideas.

THE "LITTLE ONES"

By Annie Payson Call

Swedenborg tells how the wisest and highest angels of heaven are looked upon by those below them as "little ones, and not very wise," and yet they are the very wisest of angels. This is an attractive thought to dwell upon, if one once gets started. For instance, the most profound mathematical problem to be found in this world, if given to those "little ones," would be answered at once, as readily as we humans might affirm that two and two make four. When the answer to one of these profound problems was given by one of these "little ones," the only response that would come from another would be a quiet, "Why, of course." Just as one of us might say when asked by a child to tell the sum of two and two: "Look, my child, at those two apples, and then put two more apples with them. Don't you see there are four?" "Why, of course."

So it would be with these "little ones, and not very wise" with every great truth of art—whether painting, sculpture, music, or poetry. All which is even now beyond the intelligence of us humans is to them, with gracious simplicity, "Why, of course."

As we look into this assertion with regard to the highest angels and think of the many facts it suggests to us, we do not need Emanuel Swedenborg to convince us of its truth. The more we think, the more self-evident it is that the finest, truest, most intelligent minds must indeed seem like "little ones, and not very wise" to those below them.

The truths of human relations and of the relations of all humans to God as well as the relations of God to His children are the greatest of all truths, and in their beauty and power include all minor truths of art, science and life.

A complex mind could never rise to the simplicity of such

great truths. A mind rigidly set on but one small branch of such greatness shuts itself off entirely from grasping any universal truth itself—or any other branch of such truth. A mind turned to self or self-aggrandisement or self-assertion, however wise it may seem to itself or to a few of its satellites, is in a dark pit compared with these highest of angels who seem to those below them as “little ones, and not very wise.”

Compare with this a well-bred, sophisticated man of the world,—a man who heartily and sincerely believes that, knowing the world as he does, he knows all that one needs to know, and who looks down with ill-concealed contempt on those who do not know the world as he does.

Let me cite a case which will illustrate the truth of what Swedenborg has told us on a plane lower than that of the highest angels. Also this same example may prove that there can be serious blunders made in the practice of psychoanalysis, even though such blunders are not the immediate fault of the learned men who are involved. But that is another story.

A man who was without depth, who was full of selfishness, and harboring various forms of discontent as a consequence, went to Europe to be psychoanalyzed, thus being sure of reaching his freedom. He returned in a state which seemed to be the result of a thorough training in sophistication. Whereas he had inhibited some of his selfishness before, now it was all let loose, and in feeling that it was “freedom” to do just as he, his selfish self, wanted to do, he ran riot with his newly established knowledge of the world. He felt so certain that his worldly wisdom was wisdom itself that the friends about him, who were living straightforward, sensible lives, finding themselves out and acting intelligently on such discoveries, seemed to him like foolish children, “not more than five years old.” It was very curious to observe

how these five-year-olds saw through their newly arrived friend and recognized the selfishness in him, while he himself was entirely ignorant of his own character—or lack of character—and equally ignorant of the character of those about him.

Is not the above a worth-while example in detail by which we are enabled to understand the truth of the assertion that the highest and wisest of angels seem to those below them as “little ones, and not very wise?”

How often we see people strutting in their pride of knowledge of the world: proud of being sophisticated, without a thought of the dictionary definition, “Sophistication is corruption by false argument.” It is like dwelling entirely on the surface, without a thought or a care or the least understanding of the centre. What value is there in understanding the many phases and conglomerations of the surface when such understanding is so entirely superficial as to have no possible depth? To understand and grasp the real meaning of the surface, one must see from the centre. From the centre, light is white and clear; on the surface, it is many variegated colors and often black—black as jet.

All men are sons of God.

—Milton.

Blessed is he who hath love on his lips and loving kindness in his heart.

—*Jewish Apocryphal Beatitudes.*

All the genius I have lies just in this: When I have a subject in hand, I study it profoundly. Day and night it is before me. I explore it in all its bearings; my mind becomes pervaded with it. Then the effort which I make the people are pleased to call the fruit of genius. It is the fruit of labor and thought.

—Alexander Hamilton.

SOME TEACHING OF THE BUDDHA

From the Pali Canon

THE ARIYAN SPEECH

They who talk angrily, full of wrath and proud,
 Carp at each other's failings when they meet,
 And take delight in blame and finding fault,
 And in their rival's fall. But Ariyans
 Will never follow practices like these.
 If there be one, a wise man, fain of speech,
 He knows the proper time, and speech concerned
 With righteousness and practice of right talk.
 Thus speaks a sage, not angry, well-restrained
 With humble mind, not laying down the law,
 Not curious; but wisely speaks fair speech,
 Welcomes the kindly word, rejects the cruel,
 Knows no resentment, does not carp at faults,
 Does not retort or crush his rival down,
 Nor from the issue speak. Oh true it is
 That Ariyan's words alike instruct and please!
 Thus Ariyans speak, such is the Ariyan talk:
 And, knowing this, the wise should humbly speak.

THE ARIYAN SILENCE

I.

Thus have I heard. In a certain occasion the Exalted One was staying near Savatthi at Jeta Grove in Anathapindika's Park.

Then the venerable Moggallana the Great said to the brethren: "Friends and brethren!"

"Yes, friend," replied those brethren to the venerable Moggallana the Great.

Then said the venerable Moggallana the Great: "Here, friends, when I was secluded and living all alone, this discursive thought occurred to me: 'The Ariyan Silence! The

Ariyan Silence! they say. Now what means this Ariyan silence?"

"Then, friends, I thus thought: 'herein a brother, by the suppression of discursive thought and investigation, enters on and abides in the Second Trance, a state of internal calm of heart, concentrated on its object, free from discursive thought and investigation, born of mental balance, a state of zest and ease. This is called *the Ariyan Silence*.'

"So I, friends, by the suppression of discursive thought and investigation, entered on and abode in the Second Trance . . . a state of zest and ease. And, friends, as I was abiding in that state, there came to me ideas, workings of mind, accompanied by discursive thought.

"Thereupon, friends, the Exalted One by magic power came to me and thus spake: 'Moggallana, Moggallana! desert not the Ariyan Silence! In the Ariyan silence establish thy mind! In the Ariyan silence make thy mind sole arbiter! In the Ariyan silence balance thy mind!' "

II.

Now on that occasion a number of brethren were assembled in the hermitage of Rammaka, the brahmin, and were occupied in holy speech.

Then the Exalted One stood in the porch outside the door, waiting for the talk to come to an end. Then the Exalted One, seeing that the talk was over, coughed and rattled the door-bar. And those brethren opened the door to the Exalted One.

Then the Exalted One entered the hermitage of Rammaka, the brahmin, and sat down on a seat made ready. So seated, He thus addressed the brethren:

"What was it, brethren, that ye were talking of, assembled here, and what was the subject of the talk just broken off?"

"It was about the Exalted One, Lord, that we were talk-

ing, and had just left off when the Exalted One arrived."

"Well said, brethren! It is fitting, brethren, for you, as clansmen who have in faith gone forth from home to live the homeless life, thus to assemble and engage in holy speech. When ye meet together, brethren, ye should do one of two things: engage in holy speech or keep the Ariyan silence."

RESENTMENT

Now the venerable Tissa, nephew to the Exalted One's father, went into the presence of the Exalted One, saluted Him, and sat down at one side, woeful, dejected, and shedding a flood of tears.

Then said the Exalted One to the venerable Tissa: "How now, Tissa? Why sit you here beside me, woeful, dejected, and shedding a flood of tears?"

"Lord, it is because the brethren with one accord have been mocking me and teasing me."

"Then, Tissa, that is because you yourself have a tongue and cannot endure the tongue of others. Now, Tissa, it is not seemly that you, a clansman, who gave up your home and went forth to the homeless life, should have a sharp tongue and not endure the tongue of others. One who, like you, has a tongue should also endure the tongue of others."

Thus spake the Exalted One. When the Well-farer had thus spoken, the Master added this yet further:

"Why art thou angry? Be not angry, Tissa.

Meekness is best for thee; and to restrain

Anger, conceit, hypocrisy is best.

It is for this we live the righteous life."

THE RELEASE CALLED THE BEAUTIFUL

(The Master had been accused of several heresies by different sects, among others, of having taught that the universe was of fortuitous origin, a mere sport of chance. He now explains to the Wanderer, Bhaggava.)

"Now I, Bhaggava, have attained to the topmost Knowledge. Not only do I know that, but I know it in its highest excellence. And still further, I do not misapply that knowledge. As I do not misapply it, I have seen the Calm, realizing which, the Tathagata cannot fall into error.

"Now, Bhaggava, as I have thus declared (my knowledge), certain recluses and brahmins have abused me with groundless, empty lies that have no truth in them, saying: 'Gotama, the recluse, and his brethren have gone astray. For Gotama, the recluse, teaches this:—When one reaches up to the Release called the Beautiful, and having reached it, abides therein, at such a time he regards the whole universe as ugly.'

"But I never said that, Bhaggava. This is what I do say:—Whenever one reaches up to the Release called the Beautiful, then he knows indeed what Beauty is."

"Then, Lord, it is they who have gone astray, they who accuse the Exalted One and His brethren of having gone astray. Assured am I, Lord, in the Exalted One. It is the Exalted One who can teach me in such a way that I too reached it, may abide therein."

Friar Giles said to a friar, "Gladly, gladly would I know what contemplation is!" And that friar made answer, "Father, I do not yet know." Then Friar Giles said: "Meseemeth that the dignity of contemplation is a Divine fire, and a sweet devotion of the Holy Spirit, and an ecstasy and abstraction of the mind, intoxicated by the contemplation of that ineffable savour of the Divine sweetness; and a soft and still and sweet delight of soul, which is uplifted and rapt in great admiration of glorious, supernal, celestial things; and a burning inward sense of that heavenly and unspeakable glory."

—*Teachings of Friar Giles.*

A QUARTER CENTURY

The evening of April twenty-first was a memorable occasion in the annals of the Vedanta Centre of Boston. It was set aside to commemorate the first coming to Boston of Swami Paramananda, twenty-five years ago. The chapel auditorium and library were beautifully arranged for the celebration. Throughout the day, a profusion of Spring flowers carried to the Swami a living tribute from many friends and added greatly to the loveliness of the setting. It was a perfect, early Spring evening and it brought forth a large number of old and new friends, taxing the seating capacity of the Centre to the limit. Among other distinguished guests were three spiritual brothers of the Swami from the Ramakrishna Mission in India, Swami Bodhananda, head of the New York Vedanta Society, Swami Akhilananda, leader of the Providence Vedanta Society and his co-worker, Swami Nikhilananda.

A delightful musical program was arranged by Mr. Einar Hansen of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, with the assistance of two gifted musician friends and Master Harold Hansen. Mr. Hansen had given up an important engagement in order to be present. The quartet played selections from Beethoven, which brought warm response from the hearers. The evening began as Swami Paramananda entered, the entire audience rising to greet him with enthusiastic applause. The Swami gracefully said that although it was not for him to speak the opening words on such an occasion, it was necessary that he ask the indulgence of his hearers for a few moments. He explained that due to an unforeseen circumstance, Miss Katherine F. Sherwood, one of his oldest and most faithful friends was unable to preside, so the charge of the program would fall to the lot of the youngest member of his work, Srimati Gayatri Devi.

Gayatri Devi took her place beside the Swami and immediately introduced Master Harold Hansen, the thirteen year old son of his distinguished father, who played two lovely violin numbers which were received with great enthusiasm. Then Gayatri Devi came forward, her hands filled with telegrams and letters from the Swami's friends far and wide. She announced that she had gained the Swami's permission to share the contents of both telegrams and messages. Her repetition of the Swami's humorous remark, "The Western Union is making money today, the stock should be rising," brought a ripple of laughter from the audience.

From the Cincinnati Group came the following: "Unable to be present at your twenty-fifth anniversary. Cincinnati Group sends heartfelt greetings, rejoicing in the success made possible through your tireless labor of love. May we be privileged to have you and your blessings many years more is our prayer."

From Mr. and Mrs. Cartozian, who had first contacted the Swami in Portland, Oregon: "Please accept our hearty congratulations on your twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of your work. We treasure as one of our highest experiences, our first vision of the breadth, length, depth and height of the wisdom which is Vedanta through the guidance of Swamiji."

From Los Angeles and the Hollywood Group: "Congratulations and every good wish for the birthday child. May each year be more beautiful than the last. Our country has been greatly blessed for the past quarter of a century by the radiant light of a holy life. Our prayer is that we may become less unworthy of such a blessing."

From Louisville: "Loving greetings congratulations. Wish we could be with you for celebration."

There were also telegrams from the Swami's California

Ashrama, Pasadena friends and individual messages from Sister Devamata and Sister Satya Prana, who have known the Swami since the first day of his arrival in this country. Gayatri Devi stated that she could only take the time to read portions of the letters received as a long program had been planned for the evening.

From Mrs. Dain of New York: "This seems to be a year for twenty-fifth anniversaries. A few weeks ago, John Haynes Holmes celebrated his, and yesterday, Rabbi Wise. And now, Swami Paramananda. All three have a great record for service. The world would be a finer place if only there were more of them."

From Rev. Eliot White (formerly of Grace Church, New York) and Mrs. White came the following: "We should certainly enjoy being with you if it were possible, for Swami Paramananda's spiritual vision has meant much to us in the last few years. As we cannot come to Boston, we send our hearty good wishes for Thursday evening and also for the years to come."

From Mr. Gerard Carter, California: "There is no one, Minister, Rabbi, World Savior or Hindu teacher who can take your place or even approximate that place in our hearts. We send you our tender love and greeting. Stay as long as you feel you can accomplish more in Boston than you can here. Your life is for all and we cannot find it in our hearts to be selfish in wishing you here always. However, it will be a bright and sunny moment when you come walking down the train steps, landing lightly on the walk at the little old station at Pasadena."

One of the Swami's countrymen, Professor Joshi of Dartmouth College, wrote: "It is not possible to obtain a true estimate of the work you have been steadily doing in Boston and California within the last twenty-five years. I was

highly impressed by the wonderful work you have done at La Crescenta as well as in Massachusetts. You have been brave in fighting against many odds and in gathering around you from year to year, groups of eager disciples willing to put the knowledge of Vedanta to the test of a practical work-a-day world. Go forward, my dear Swami, with unfaltering aim and steady faith in the truth of your message through the coming years and leave the fruits of your labors in the hands of God and the hearts of your followers."

Then was read aloud the beautiful letter received by Gayatri Devi from Miss Annie Payson Call, the Swami's distinguished friend: "It would indeed be a privilege to be there—and if I could accept your invitation to speak—I have very happy things to say both in my heart and my mind—that would go toward thanking the Swami for his very real and steady use here. Does anyone appreciate what it is when a man like Swami Paramananda leaves his own country to be of use in another country and a country which is such a contrast to the peace and beauty of his own home. And the beauty of it is that the broad spiritual value of his use is not confined to one form of religion. He opens the way for us here to see that 'all religion has relation to life and the life of religion is to do good.' He helps us to the active expression in our every day lives of the best truth we can find, of the most perfect love of which we are capable.

"I would be grateful to attend the reception and to speak what words I could to congratulate the Swami and all those who know him upon the work of these twenty-five years, but I am not yet strong enough to be out even in the early evening and be ready for my work, the next day, but I am sure the Swami would rather I were not there under such circumstances. Please give my love to him and say I will be there in spirit with you all. I shall be sending twenty-five roses on

Thursday, one for each of the twenty-five years that are past. Please put them where the Swami can see them and I hope they may remind him of me as if I were there, for I have been told by a very wise man that roses mean friendship, and I am certainly the true friend of the Swami Paramananda, and of you, my dear 'Sister' Gayatri Devi."

The following spontaneous poem composed by Miss Jennie Raymond stirred all hearts as it conveyed the deep feeling of one who has been a friend to the Swami and the work for many years:

TO SWAMIJI

Twenty five years? How time does fly!
Surely it cannot be that long, we cry,
Since Swamiji to this country came,
Bearing his message of power and flame.

Well we remember his bearing so poised,
There in St. Botolph Street, how we rejoiced
To hear from the lips of a mortal, so young,
Wisdom and eloquence, lyrically sung.

The room, it was plain, but a magical spell
Seemed to vibrate like the sweet tones of a bell,
As the young leader spoke with a radiance bright,
Teaching, "Varied are paths that lead upward to Light."

Much more pretentious is this Centre here,
But never can any place seem quite so dear,
As where first we heard that clear call to our soul,
To arise and awake with Truth for our goal.

The years, they deal kindly, with those set apart
By compassion and service with God in their heart,
He still is as youthful, his brow as serene,
Peter Pan is no myth, or a figment of dream.

We owe to India a debt that's untold,
A Son of Hers came bearing gifts, more than gold.
Words seem inadequate but this thought is sincere,
That God indeed blessed us when Swami came here."

Gayatri Devi then introduced Swami Bodhananda and asked him to give a word of greeting. He spoke as follows: "From time immemorial, India has been known as the land of spirituality and India has sent forth three great waves of spirituality which have inundated the whole world. The first wave arose with the time and age of the Vedas and this wave swept over the whole of the then known world. The second wave arose in the pre-Buddhistic age of the 7th Century B. C., and it received an impetus from the teachings of Buddha and that wave also swept over the whole world, eastward and westward. The third and last wave has just been set in motion. It is now nearly a hundred years ago that India had the great privilege of seeing the appearance of a great spiritual genius. I mean Sri Ramakrishna. I have not time to describe to you tonight, the great service that this great genius has rendered to the world. Of course you have heard from Swami Paramananda that one of the most astounding features of his life and teaching is the harmony of religions. He realized through all religions and he found that all religions met at a common centre. Nearly thirty-nine years ago, his most powerful, faithful, competent disciple, Swami Vivekananda, brought this message of harmony of religions to this country and about that time, 1893, he first visited Boston and cleared the way for those who came after him. Friends, I am exceedingly glad to be with you tonight on this splendid occasion and I congratulate you upon this most blessed privilege to range yourselves under the guidance of Swami Paramananda."

Gayatri Devi then introduced Swami Akhilananda who spoke with deep feeling: "Swami Paramananda, revered Swamis and friends: I am so pleased tonight to be with you on this very happy occasion while you are offering your appreciation and love to our beloved Swami Paramananda as

your spiritual guide, friend and companion. Swami Paramananda has been working in this country for twenty five years and your inspiring presence here proves how deeply you appreciate his service. The beauty of his service is his spiritual inspiration, his sweet nature and his love for all of you. I do not feel that I have to say anything in this connection as you all feel his love in your heart. This shows that the message which he is spreading amongst you and amongst your friends in this and other parts of this country is deeply affecting the people. Also the love of his consecrated workers and friends who are working with him and serving you shows that his teachings are transforming the people. So with these few words, I would like to conclude, tonight. Thank you."

Swami Nikhilananda then said:

"Revered Swamis, ladies and gentlemen, I am very happy to be with you on this very pleasant occasion. It reminds me of an incident that happened in the life of Swami Vivekananda when he was in this country about forty years ago. When he came here with his flowing robe and yellow turban, he looked queer. There were no Hindus in this country at that time. One day when he was passing through a town, some boys were playing, and as he passed, the boys came and stood before him. The Swami said, 'Hello, what are you looking at?' and the leader of the boys said, 'Oh, it speaks, too.' That was their impression of a Hindu monk at that time. They could not distinguish one from another. It gives me great pleasure to see how things have changed and how, during these forty years, Centres have been started from coast to coast.

"This is a very happy occasion and the seed which was first put in the ground twenty-five years ago by Swami Paramananda has been nourished since then by his life and character. After passing through various vicissitudes, it has grown into

a full grown tree which is giving shelter to many people. It is just twenty-five years old and we wish it a happy career for many, many years. To you, revered Swami, I can only express in an informal way, but I pray to God with all the sincerity I possess that He may give unto you long life, a happy career, so that you may go on with your great work of love and bring happiness and peace to many hearts. I thank you all."

Mrs. Laura Huxtable Porter was called upon to say a few words. She most graciously rose and responded:

"Swami, and friends, I had not thought to take any part in your program. I came here tonight that I might bring my silent appreciation for the life and work of Swami Paramananda. I cannot express that appreciation better than by using the words of Swami's own poem which I dearly love among many others:

INSPIRATION

Inspiration, Thy coming is like the falling of noiseless dew-drops
on unopened flower-buds, not conscious of their heavenly
heritage.

Thou divine Magician,
Transformer and transmitter of beauty,
Thou dost change all earth's harsh notes into heaven's unspeak-
able sweetness.

At Thy touch a broken reed sounds divine harmony
And mortal voice sings immortal song.
When all is covered by the blank sheet of darkness and naught is
seen,

Thou enterest unaware with Thy all-filling light,
Transforming gloom to brightness.

The touch of Thy holy hand is my sole adornment.
A glance from Thy smiling eyes hath poured upon me a shower of
countless blossoms.

Now I gather these scattered flowers day and night with ecstatic
joy,

For they bear the blessing of Thy divine fragrance.

Thou art the enchantment of song,
Rhapsody of rhyme, intoxication of ecstasy!

Thou art the might of the mighty,
Sanctity of the saint, melody of the musician!

Thou all-glorious Spirit of transcendent loveliness,
In awe and dumb wonderment I adore Thee!

She also recited "Be Thou a Lamp" from "Rhythm of Life." Before her beautiful, sympathetic reading of the poem, she said: "The Swami must have listened often to the One whose words he has followed so closely—

"Be Thou a lamp unto thy fellow-men, unfailing.
Let thy light of love burn at all hours without ceasing.
Be not downcast or depress thy heart if, perchance, it burneth dim.
Let it burn bright or let it be dim,
But be thou ever an unfailing lamp."

"I feel that the Swami's lamp has always burned bright and distance cannot make it dim and I can only hope as I know everyone else does that that flame will go on shining with the same radiance, the same sweetness, the same truth, the same helpfulness that it has shown for the last twenty-five years for twenty-five years more, and many, many beside."

Gayatri Devi thanked this guest again and again as the whole audience was deeply moved and inspired by Mrs. Porter's delicate sentiments and appreciation.

It was a very pleasant surprise when, after a few moments' absence, Gayatri Devi returned, transformed into a flower maiden of Spring. She wore blossoms in her hair and in her girdle as she sang a gay tune accompanied by the delicate wind harp music of her esraj. It was the melody the budding flowers and leaves whisper when the God of Spring gently approaches and calls them to life. She said this Spring festival song was her special offering to Swami Paramananda who was given the name Basanta, which means Spring in India, upon his entry into the spiritual order. He was often called "Basanta Kokil" (the Spring song bird) by Swami Brahmananda, the first President of the Ramakrishna Mission, whose tenderness for the young Swami was very great. Srimati said that this name was very appropriate for the Swami as his nature is full of song, and wherever he goes, he brings enthusiasm and joy. The audience burst into a peal of laughter when Gayatri Devi added that the Swami's coming and going were also like the Spring as no one place had ever been able to hold him captive for all time. Master Harold Hansen then congratulated the Swami and presented

him with an address of appreciation together with many tokens of his friends' love and devotion. Miss Lois Houghton read the address aloud.

Revered and Beloved Swami:

It is difficult to convey in words, the deep feeling with which we, your friends and followers in Boston, approach you on this happy Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Celebration. Time has moved swiftly since you first came to us on your great mission. Through these long years, you have constantly shed upon us that which has enriched our lives beyond measure. We ever look to you for wisdom, for strength, for Light. In you and your work, we find unfailing inspiration for all our needs. Allow us to tell you, dear Swami, that your exalted ideals of tolerance, universality and service have bound us together in greater understanding of Mother India. Through you, her worthy son, she has revealed her age long Truths and her glorious traditions and has drawn us close to her heart. What offering can we lay before you save our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation for your glowing life and teaching. May you abide with us always and may the Great Spirit shower upon you His choicest blessings even as your tender benediction rests upon us. With hearts united in love and reverence, we are, your friends."

Swami gave his reply in stirring words. We deeply regret that only a portion of his inspiring address can be given here. He said:

"As I have been sitting here listening to the various speeches of the evening and musing within myself, these few lines have come to my mind, "What I feel now, I cannot say; words are not yet made for its utterance." You have probably read these lines before but I have never found their usage more fitting than at the present moment. What can I really say to you in response to all the beautiful sentiments you have expressed, your congratulations, and the prayers and blessings which you have showered upon me upon this occasion. I know that if I begin to survey, weigh and measure my life and action, I can never say that I have deserved them, yet all these have come to my destiny. I can only say in the terms of Shakespeare, If you give a man according to his des-

serts, who will escape whipping. Whatever good has been accomplished through my humble instrumentality, I am certain that a very large portion of it is due to your unfailing devotion and loyalty. I do not feel that I have acquired any great wisdom even through this long lapse of time, but I feel more and more certain that the Power that has always sustained me and given me the inspiration is the Doer of all things. I am no pioneer and I do not wish to be placed upon a pedestal even by you.

"I feel most grateful to my friend, Mrs. Porter, who has just finished reciting the poem, 'Inspiration.' This being one of the oldest poems I ever wrote, it has rather remained buried but tonight, she has rekindled its living flame. Indeed, inspiration comes to us from a greater source than ourselves and when its flame burns in our souls, we become instrumental in conveying its divine and beneficent message in the world of life.

"I accept all these tokens of love and appreciation you have showered upon me with a deep sense of humility and my one prayer is that through divine Grace, and through your good will, I may learn to do the things I have tried to do all my life a little better and more worthily. I do not claim anything for myself. I have stumbled many times along the pathway and many times and often, I have felt faint of heart, but the love of the great Souls has always come to my aid. We cannot estimate the influence of a work like this. Our province is to 'Hold aloft the Light' placed in our hands by another Power higher than ourselves and carry it on, and how tremendously conscious I feel, even at this moment that the same Power is before me as I look at your faces lighted up with feelings of love and joy.

With many arms dost Thou shield me,

With many hearts dost Thou love me,

With many minds dost Thou guide me to the road of safety.

This is your share, my friends, in my life and destiny. If this work has flourished, it is because it has been blessed by the divine Hand and nurtured by your love and loyalty. Therefore, I cannot ask that my life alone may be blessed because it can only be blessed when your life is blessed at the same time, and my prayer for you all is, Be Thou an unfaill-

ing Lamp unto thy fellow men, may this be true of everyone of you, that as you evolve larger thought and spiritual illumination everyone of you may carry in your heart the joy of God and the radiance of Divine beauty."

The Swami also related in the course of his address many interesting episodes and reminiscences, especially when he first came to visit Mrs. Ole Bull of beloved memory. He spoke of his having officiated at a Christmas Eve service arranged by Sister Nivedita.

As the Swami paused, tears shone in many eyes for it was a moment of great joy and gratitude.

Gayatri Devi said in conclusion, "Beloved Swami, if our thoughts and feelings were visible objects, we would have seen you garlanded from head to foot with blossoms of love and devotion. We thank you for your being. We shall always keep you safe in the shelter of our hearts, as you desire to be placed on no pedestal."

Then all the friends showered upon the Swami their congratulations and hearty wishes for long life, and success. After refreshments were served, many paid the Swami a parting tribute and asked him to invite them to his Golden Anniversary.

REPORT

Early risers on Easter Morn experienced something quite unearthly on the Sunrise Terrace of the Ananda-Ashrama. The motor cars began to arrive from very long distances as early as 4:45 in the morning, although the actual Service had been announced for 5:47. They were ushered to their specific parking places by the two youngest members of the Ashrama Household, Jackie and Bryan, who were, of course, assisted by the two older brothers, George and John. There was no commotion or undue noise by the scores of automobiles which arrived there. The Service began with a beautiful musical program which added greatly to the solemnity of the occasion. When Swami Paramananda's Song of Dawn was sung by rich voices in accompaniment with the harp it sounded as if the morning breeze itself was playing upon the strings. The voices of Mr. and Mrs. Rockwood were a great contribution to the occasion and the harp never sounded more celestial as

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"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES." Rig-Veda

VEDANTA MONTHLY

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JUN 27 1932

Message of the East



JUNE, 1932

Revealing Light

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Message of the East

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."

—*Ezekiel*

"Light shall come again from the East."

—*Tyndall*

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A LITANY OF LOVE

By *Swami Paramananda*

(From "Right Resolutions")

 LOVE is greater than hate,
Love is greater than doubt,
Love is greater than fear,
Love is greater than anger.
Love is greater than impatience,
Love is greater than self-pity,
Love is greater than all morbid feelings.
Love is greater than depression,
Love is greater than all the afflictions of
body and mind.

Let us climb to the high peak of thoughts and as we do so we shall find that many of our so-called insurmountable obstacles will dwindle and diminish into very small proportions. As our great Master, Sri Ramakrishna used to say: "When a man stands in the valley and looks about him, he sees nothing but differences between a tall tree and a small tree and even the blades of grass look uneven. But when he stands on the mountain top and looks down upon the valley, he sees nothing but one great mass of green verdure."—EDITOR.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

We hurl the truth against falsehood, and it crasheth into the same, and lo! it vanisheth. —*The Koran.*

Then the Blessed One pronounced this solemn utterance: When the real nature of things becometh clear to the ardent, meditating Brahman, he standeth dispelling the hosts of darkness like the sun that illumineth the sky.

—*Gautama Buddha.*

Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. —*St. Paul.*

But thou wilt find it less easy to uproot faults than to choke them by gaining virtues. —*Ruskin.*

The only remedy for bad habits is counter habits; all the bad habits that have left their impressions are to be controlled by good habits. Go on doing good, thinking holy thoughts continuously; that is the only way to suppress base impressions. Never say a man is hopeless, because he only represents a character, a bundle of habits, and these can be checked by new and better ones. Character is repeated habits, and repeated habits alone can reform character.

—*Swami Vivekananda.*

Do that which is good and no evil shall touch you.

—*Apocrypha.*

In order to exclude from the mind questionable things, the mental calling up of those things that are opposite is efficacious for their removal.

—*Patanjali.*

LYRIC

By Mildred Phillips

Poet or peasant or priest—what matter,
If the heart to its highest dream be true?
Standing apart from the world's mad clatter,
We catch the song from the upper blue.

REVEALING LIGHT

By Swami Paramananda

(A Class Lecture given at Ananda-Ashrama, La Crescenta, California)

“When we are resourceful and have found our contact with something higher, we are never sad.”

Our “Book of Daily Thoughts” here gives us a thought that is very constructive. To keep ourselves in contact with something higher is the aim of meditation and it increases our resourcefulness to such an extent that we find ever a newness, as if we were constantly drawing from a fresh supply. Men grow tired of having the same thing over and over, whether it be food, drink or association. That is the nature of human beings. Repetition is wearisome. This, however, is not true of the God-like. The God-like is eternally replenished. Like the season Spring, each day it brings new life.

When we cease to be limited in our mental concept: that is, when we no longer go round and round our little routine of eating, sleeping, drinking—of ordinary pleasures, of happiness and unhappiness, or what people call the natural conditions of life—when we break away from that, then we find our contact with that Something which is higher—higher than ourselves.

It is not by thinking on self that we preserve ourselves; rather it is by getting away from self. No matter how capable a person may be, he grows weary if he merely revolves about his own little circle of self and self-interest. We must learn to find our connection with that which is beyond this bodily existence, for there lies the greatest of blessings. “We must come in contact with the highest and the holiest and we must have willingness to receive.”

An incident in the life of Sri Ramakrishna often comes to me as a definite example of this. A devotee, who was in the

habit of visiting Sri Ramakrishna, found such joy in listening to his illumined words that out of love and kindness, out of real consideration, he brought with him a friend that he also might have the opportunity of being in the company of this holy personage. But holiness meant nothing to his friend. On the contrary, the talk on sacred matters soon made him very restless. Finally he said, "Are you going to stay here long? If so, I shall wait for you outside, down by the river."

We must have willingness to receive and we must have fitness. Willingness makes one fit. A person may begin by being crude, harsh and ignorant, but if there is in him a genuine desire, if he is eager, that eagerness will bring about a change in his being. We are all changing constantly, either for better or for worse; some sort of modification is taking place in us all the time. Human beings are not sticks and stones: they think, they feel, they aspire, but that does not mean that they think, feel and aspire always in the right way. Learning to do this is what constitutes the art of life.

"O Thou Compassionate One, help me to express the spirit of joy in all my thoughts, words and actions.

May I never yield to sadness or gloom!

Grant that my contact with Thy Divine Being may grow ever closer and closer.

And may my happiness rest wholly in Thee, who art the Source of all joy and peace."

If only we could make this prayer our own! That thought—"May I never yield to sadness or gloom!"—we should carry with us constantly. Gloom comes like a little rising mist, and according to the extent we allow it to rise, we can be altogether overshadowed by it or we can dispel it. The influence it brings is something we can control. At the very

outset, when we feel it approaching, we can take a stand against it, we can overcome it, or we can let it overwhelm us completely. Once we are swept, it takes longer to come back, but before we are possessed by such feelings we can gain the mastery, and it is here that we have to manipulate our emotional energy. Emotions can wear one out: one can be almost torn to pieces by emotions; yet these same emotions, when properly directed and controlled, become constructive forces in one's nature. There are all kinds of emotions. Emotion can go through any channel. For instance, anger is one type of emotion, love is another, and each has an entirely different reaction on the human constitution.

"Grant that my contact with Thy Divine Being may grow ever closer and closer!"

This is the greatest possible prayer that we can utter. For no matter how careful we may be, we can never safeguard ourselves, but when we draw close to that Supreme Consciousness, and as we begin to feel that closeness and keep our sense of it alive and fresh, then there is no danger. How can there be any danger from darkness when there is light? There are houses where they keep a light burning as a safeguard against thieves. It is quite a customary thing to do, because in the light the thieves are hesitant; they work always in the dark.

There are thoughts, emotions and feelings which are just like thieves. When you have a vigilant attitude, when you have a light burning within, they never show their faces. You do not have to do anything. They are turned away by the very quality of light. That is the way of spiritual life: you cease to fight and struggle with whatever imperfections there may be; you bring in their opposite. It is this that the great master-spirits teach in the form of non-resistance. You

do not need to resist. You have only to take your stand upon a higher level where these things have no access. Men may try to frighten you, they may make a great show of violence, they may threaten to annihilate you, but you have removed yourself out of their reach. Only one who stands upon a lower plane, one who is constantly thwarted by anger, envy and jealousy—those feelings which belong to that plane—only he is afraid and he has to receive the blow.

You may say, "That is merely a fancy, a nice poetic picture." But it is not. It is a very definite fact. Take it from the standpoint of ordinary life. If two people are on different levels, the one who is on the lower level cannot strike the one who is above him and exactly the same is it in regard to the mind and soul of man. In the lives of the holy, much that we read of as miracle is not miracle at all: it is the fulfillment of higher law. And so it is in this case. The plane where the law of non-resistance operates is above the level of those who are given to violence, anger and all sorts of evil instincts. They may strike at it, but their blows fall short; they cannot go so high. In spiritual life, and in ordinary life as well, it is a profound misfortune when out of impatience, in a moment of faltering consciousness, people strike back or say something harsh.

"He who has no wound in his hand may touch poison with his hand; poison does not affect one who has no wound; nor is there evil for one who does not commit evil."

The Lord Buddha tells us this and it contains a very great secret of the spiritual life, a wonderful lesson for every individual. What is the wound of life and how are we wounded? We are not wounded by others. No matter what others may do to us outwardly, they will not succeed in inflicting any real injury, but when we do something to wound our own inner being—that is the real wound. It

may be done secretly, hiddenly—it makes no difference. People who desecrate their inner sanctuary never fail to suffer. They lose all courage, hope, and faith in themselves. They know no rest. In the Bible we are told that there is not any sin greater than to offend the Holy Spirit—the Spirit within. And how do we offend that Spirit? Often we do it casually in our conversation, by hurting another, wounding another, and that wound we always inflict upon our own soul. Those who are dedicated to holy living are more reluctant to harm others than to harm themselves. Of course they can no neither. For how can a man do ill to himself when he is living in rhythm, in harmony, when he is God-consecrated? And certainly he cannot even think of harming another and at the same time maintain his inner equilibrium. It would be impossible, inconsistent.

When life is harmonized, made rhythmic, it has a wonderful effect upon the individual. It becomes just like music—like perpetual music of which one never tires. Yet it is not monotonous, it is not always the same. There are so many songs which the soul sings! There are songs which spring from the soul in the hour of exuberance and there are songs which come from the deeper recesses of being, out of pathos and profundity. Their note may be sad, we may weep, but it is because we are moved by a joy that has come too close to our inmost depth.

Carlisle says: Give me that man who sings at his work! Suppose that there are those in the world who do not sing, who are fretful, who complain if things go a little wrong, that need not affect us. We should not look back at the world. What ordinary people are doing, how they are complaining or why they are complaining is not our standard of action. We should not even think of these things, but of how we may overcome, how we may maintain our poise and balance.

We must make our foundation unshakable. We cannot do so with rocks—even the mountains shake—but the spiritual foundation, the foundation of understanding, nothing can shake. Buddha speaks of an island where no storm can reach, no enemy arise to thwart our peace. It is the island of sanctity, of illumination, which we find within and which we should seek in the hour of meditation.

Calmness, serenity, cheerfulness, these are the qualities we must cultivate. Being and becoming—constantly bringing a new influx of these qualities into our daily living—beautifies our life and makes it fruitful. Beauty does not consist merely in the physical. True beauty is light, it is inner radiance; it cleanses and purifies; it removes all blemish. A room can be made clean by going over it with a scrub brush, but our life must be cleansed from within. There is no artificial access to the inner being. The thing is to keep sanctified, and the way to do this is to maintain unbrokenly, as far as we are able, close contact with the Highest. Stay near the light and you will have no danger of darkness. This is the most logical, the most natural and the most simple means of self-preservation.

Constant dwelling on our worries and anxieties—what we have done, what took place and the blunders we have made—helps nothing. More than that, it is very detrimental. If we brood over such things we never can make any headway, for we bring in the greatest possible drawback,—too much self-consciousness. It is this which holds us from our onward course. The only remedy is the definite, positive force of light. Stay with the light, think of it, meditate upon it and constantly, constantly absorb it! In this way, whatever imperfection there may be in your nature will be counteracted. Light, everywhere light! Light is revealing—Truth-revealing—power, strength and joy-revealing—and it is this revelation which brings satisfaction to the soul.

So long as we keep our heart open to the light, all the doubts of the world cannot come and lodge there, all the evil of the world can find no entrance there. "He who has no wound in his hand may touch poison with his hand; poison does not affect one who has no wound." Do not let us ever commit any offense that will cause a wound in our inner spirit. These are the vital lessons of life. When we learn them, they bring so much richness of joy, such beauty, peace, happiness that, even unconsciously, we are able to give to others.

Think, if a number of people who have chosen the spiritual life voluntarily could really apply these principles every moment and every day, think what they could accomplish just by being! Voluntarily, we must always choose. The Lord never forces anyone to love Him. He has no need to. We love Him for the sake of love. Our wisdom grows and we find there is nowhere else that our love should be directed, for He covers everything. "Thee I love in all and all I love for Thee!"—that is the consciousness!

Do not imagine that it is just my voice which says this. It is the Voice of Spirit. When Spirit speaks through us, shines through us, when our destiny is there, then we are blessed with a true blessing—the blessing of all mystic souls. When through meditation, through prayer, through harmonious living day by day, you are able to give utterance to what Christ said or Buddha proclaimed or St. Francis declared—something which has grown to be so absolutely a part of your consciousness that for you there is only One Voice speaking from every nook and corner of the universe, One Voice which fills your whole being—when you can become such a channel, then you will find that life is a continuous song and that you are able to convey its music, its rhythm, its harmony.

Keep your heart free—free and pure! Let it circulate pure thoughts! And may these our lessons stimulate that divine instinct in every one of us, so that we may be able to receive, and to give. No individual can live here rightfully and flourish who is not able to give something. Life must be made productive, like the tree which Christ speaks of in a parable. Did He not curse a tree because it was fruitless? That is symbolic of life. A fruitless tree becomes an encumbrance. People who do nothing deny their very existence. When the heart is full—full of Truth, full of God—we have to do something; we cannot sit idle. He who praises God, who loves God, manifests that love. His meditation gives him the power to work and to serve; and that should be the idea of meditation.

O mind, "Worship the Lord, worship the Lord, worship the Lord, fool that thou art!" Any time that is taken from the hidden centre of our being is a waste. To spend ourselves on the surface things of life is foolishness, a delusion of the soul. When even for a moment we have the privilege, the opportunity of coming in contact with holy things, holy people, holy minds—of coming in contact with Truth—why, that moment becomes like a saving grace, like a ferry-boat to take one across the ocean of this world.

O Thou Supreme Being, it is Thy light which destroys
all darkness:

By Thy light everything is enlightened.

Fill us with Thy light, that through its strength and
effulgence the weight of life may roll away from us
and we may rise above all ailments and frailties.

Stay close to us! Make us part of Thee!

* * *

Let our hearts sing—let our hearts sing in supplication:
Glory to God! Glory to God! Glory to God!

Let us be so perpetually harmonious that our life may glorify that One who has bestowed upon us the boon of life.

May it be sweetened, sanctified, blessed and strengthened through His grace.

ACTION AND INACTION

By *Chuang Tzu*

He who sees inaction in action and action in inaction, he is intelligent among men; he is a man of established wisdom and a true performer of all actions.—*Bhagavad-Gita*.

The doctrine of the perfect man is to him as shadow to form, as echo to sound. Ask and it responds, fulfilling its message as the help-mate of humanity. Noiseless in repose, objectless in motion, it guides you to the goal, free to come and free to go forever without end. Alone in its exits and its entrances, it rivals the eternity of the sun.

As for his body, that is in accordance with the usual standard. Being in accordance with the usual standard, it is not distinguished in any way. But if not distinguished in any way, what becomes of the distinction by which he is distinguished?

Those who see what is to be seen,—of such were the perfect men of old. Those who see what is not to be seen,—they are the chosen of the universe.

Low in the scale, but still to be allowed for,—matter. Humble, but still to be followed,—mankind. Of others, but still to be attended to,—affairs. Harsh, but still necessary to be set forth,—the law. Far off, but still claiming our presence,—duty to one's neighbor. Near, but still claiming extension,—charity. Of sparing use, but still to be of bounteous store,—ceremony. Of middle course, but still to be of lofty scope,—virtue. One, but yet not to be without

modification,—TAO. Spiritual, yet not to be devoid of action,—God.

Therefore the true Sage looks up to God, but does not offer to aid. He perfects his virtue, but does not involve himself. He guides himself by TAO, but makes no plans. He identifies himself with charity, but does not rely on it. He extends to duty toward his neighbor, but does not store it up. He responds to ceremony without tabooing it. He undertakes affairs without declining them. He metes out law without confusion. He relies on his fellow-men and does not make light of them. He accommodates himself to matter and does not ignore it.

While there should be no action, there should be also no inaction. He who is not divinely enlightened will not be sublimely pure. He who has not clear apprehension of TAO will find this beyond his reach. And he who is not enlightened by TAO,—alas indeed for him!

What then is TAO?—There is the TAO of God and the TAO of man. Inaction and compliance make the TAO of God: action and entanglement the TAO of man. The TAO of God is fundamental: the TAO of man is accidental. The distance which separates them is great. Let us all take heed thereto! . . .

The Master said, "TAO covers and supports all things,"—so vast is its extent. Each man should prepare his heart accordingly.

"To act by means of inaction is God. To speak by means of inaction is Virtue. To love men and care for things is Charity. To recognize the unlike as the like is breadth of view. To make no distinctions is liberal. To possess variety is wealth. And so, to hold fast to virtue is strength. To complete virtue is establishment. To follow TAO is to be prepared. And not to run counter to the natural bias of things is to be perfect.

"He who fully realizes these ten points, by storing them within enlarges his heart, and with this enlargement brings all creation to himself. Such a man will bury gold on the hillside and cast pearls into the sea. He will not struggle for wealth, nor strive for fame. He will not rejoice at old age, nor grieve over early death. He will find no pleasure in success, no chagrin in failure. He will not account a throne as his own private gain, nor the empire of the world as glory personal to himself. His glory is to know that all things are One, and that life and death are but phases of the same existence!"

The Master said, "How profound in its repose, how infinite in its purity, is TAO! If metal and stone were without TAO, they would not be capable of emitting sound. And just as they possess the property of sound but will not emit sound unless struck, so surely is the same principle applicable to all creation. . . .

"Without TAO, form cannot be endued with life. Without virtue, life cannot be endued with intelligence. To preserve one's form, live out one's life, establish one's virtue, and realize TAO,—is not this complete virtue?

"Issuing forth spontaneously, moving without premeditation, all things following in his wake,—such is the man of complete virtue!

"He can see where all is dark. He can hear where all is still. In the darkness he alone can see light. In the stillness he alone can detect harmony. He can sink to the lowest depths of materialism. To the highest heights of spirituality he can soar. This because he stands in due relation to all things. Though a mere abstraction, he can minister to their wants, and ever and anon receive them into rest,—the great, the small, the long, the short, forever without end."

THE GLOWING COAL OF ISAIAH

By Eliot White

(Isaiah 6: 1-8)

Perhaps the Temple never seemed so dark
With evening shadows, nor the holy courts
So empty of their wonted worshipers,
When young Isaiah saw the Angelic throng.
Above the pavement "high and lifted up"
The heavenly Throne was circled by their wings
And filled the sacred place with golden light.
Six mighty pinions wrapped each seraph shape—
With twain his face to cover, twain his feet,
And twain to bear his form in burning flight.
And as the adoring servers of their King
Chaired each to each in raptured antiphons,
And "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord!"
Continually cried, behold, the posts
Of all the Temple doors were moved,
And smoke, like clouds of incense, filled the shrine!
The trembling mortal moaned, "I am undone;
"I am a man of unclean lips, and dwell
"Amid a people of like speech; and yet
"Mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!"
The youth's humility prevailed like prayer
That seeks no favor but lays bare the soul,
And swiftly summoned from the heavenly choir
One of the seraphim who with the tongs
From off the altar bore a living coal
And laid it on the marveling prophet's mouth.
"Lo this," the angelic ministrant declared,
"Hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity
"Is taken away, and all thy sin is purged."
Then from the Throne the consecrated heard

A Voice!—"Whom shall I send, and who will go
"To take our message?" "Here am I," he said,
"Send me!" . . . And thus Isaiah was empowered
For all his fearless witness to the world.

Again the glowing coal that touches mouths
Still unashamed to own their speech defiled,
And purges, though with anguish, human lips,
Could dower new prophets for as high a task
As long ago was laid on Amoz' son.
O glorious Seraphim, appear once more,
Though modern temple courts seem dark and lone!
With sixfold wings of splendor chase our gloom,
Shake all the gates, and fill each sorrowing shrine
With incense-smoke of ardent prayer renewed.
Then lay on lips of chosen messengers
The altar coal of ever-burning faith,
And send them so commissioned with God's truth
That they may banish, in His Name, the greed
That makes our times unclean, and steals from men
Their heritage of brotherhood and mirth.
So they shall show as prophets did of old,
At risk of obloquy and forfeiture
Of cherished things, the only path to peace.
Across the perilous chasm 'twixt blind wealth
And all men else it seeks to dominate,
Let modern prophets fling their daring bridge,
And cleaving through the hills of pride and wrong,
Build level way of justice for the Feet
That though they bear the nailprints of old hate,
Are eager in forgiving love to lead
A willing people through the wilderness
To fairer Canaan of a whole world's hope.

THE WAY OF TRUE HAPPINESS

From "Spiritual Teachings of Swami Brahmananda"

(Given to his young disciples.)

The Swami: Do you know why I ask you seriously, all of you, to devote yourselves heart and soul to the Lord? When we were of your age, Thakur (Sri Ramakrishna) used to push us and make us do our spiritual practices. In boyhood the mind remains plastic like clay. It receives an indelible impression from whatever it comes in contact with. So long as clay remains soft, you can give it any shape you like. But when the clay is burned, this cannot be done. Your mind now is like unburnt clay. It can be moulded in any way you want. It is still pure and untainted, so it can be directed very easily toward God. If the mind is kept wholly occupied with thoughts of the Lord from this time on, no foreign thought can disturb it. If the mind be now firmly fixed on the Divine, you need have no anxiety about your spiritual progress.

The mind is like a packet of mustard seeds. If the seeds are once scattered, it is very difficult to gather them up. So I ask you to mould your mind before its energy becomes scattered. When you grow old and the energy of your mind has been frittered away, you will have to make very strenuous efforts to concentrate it; you will experience tremendous difficulty when you try to focus it on a particular object. Do you not see how impressionable is the mind of a little boy? You are now like him. If you want to mould yourselves, strive for it earnestly from your sixteenth to your thirtieth year. After that there is less chance of achieving illumination. Up to the thirtieth year the body and the mind remain fresh. That is the time when the mind can be given a definite shape. But you must labor hard and devote yourselves heart and soul to your ideal of life. Whatever impres-

sion the mind may receive during youth will last throughout life. If therefore you have determined to lead a holy life in order to realize God, strive your utmost from today. Your health is all right now. The mind also is plastic. This is the time for spiritual practices. Mould your mind through constant struggle. If this period of your life goes by, it will be more difficult to do anything afterwards.

If you can leave a strong stamp on the mind during this period, if you can make God the be-all and end-all of your existence, if you can devote yourselves sincerely to realize Him, you will be free from all sorrow and pain. No misery, no unhappiness will be able to throw you off your balance. You will become the inheritor of everlasting bliss and joy divine.

What does man want? He wants happiness. How he runs after it! What plans he makes! What strenuous efforts he puts forth! But does he get it? After many attempts, after many a plan, he is baffled. He plans again and again, but to no purpose. In this way his whole life ebbs away. He has not the good fortune to enjoy peace and happiness at all. He toils hard like an ordinary laborer and in return reaps sorrow and pain. Then he departs from this world. Thus he lives and dies in vain. Nothing better can be expected by one who runs after empty pleasures, forgetting the goal of life.

If you wish to attain real happiness, you must sacrifice all worldly pleasures, all attachment for fleeting joys, and direct the whole energy of your mind toward God. The more you advance toward Him, the greater the bliss you will realize. The more your mind becomes attached to the world and to sense-enjoyments, the more you will suffer.

Do you know the nature of the ordinary man? He seeks only pleasure, joy and diversion. And he makes this mistake

from the very beginning. Ninety-nine percent of those who seek happiness do not know what it really is. They grasp at whatever they find near at hand and believe they have got the thing they seek. Then when they are disappointed, they take up something else; and when again they fail, they bemoan their lot. But see the folly of it!—They are disappointed again and again, still they will not change their course, they will not take up the right path. They pass their lives receiving blow after blow and bewailing their destiny. Thakur (Sri Ramakrishna) used to compare them to a camel. The camel will not take good grass even when close by. It knows well that thorny grass makes the mouth bleed, but still it insists on eating it. In the same way man suffers because of wrong thoughts and wrong desires.

You are boys—very young boys. Your mind has not yet received any evil impression from the outside world. If you can struggle hard from now on, you will be able to escape life's sorrows and miseries.

Whatever the riches you may possess, whatever your chances of living a happy and prosperous life, however wide your circle of friends and well-wishers, you will not have real happiness. All these things last for a few moments, or at the most an hour; they do not last longer. Then comes a reaction of misery. Thus reaction follows action. If one is to attain true and eternal happiness, one must aspire after that joy which brings no reaction in its train. Wherein lies that true and eternal happiness? It lies in realizing God. This divine enjoyment alone brings no reaction; all other kinds of enjoyments you can name are followed by reaction. And you must know that wherever there is reaction, there is sorrow and suffering.

Never forget the ideal of human life. This life is not given us to while away in eating, drinking and sleeping like

an animal—in idle gossip and such things. When you have been born as a human being, spurn all worldly enjoyments. Firmly resolve to realize God and attain infinite bliss. Flinch not, even if you die in the attempt.

Why have you come away from your hearth and home in the name of our Thakur (Sri Ramakrishna)? Is it not to realize Him, to get rid of the sorrows and sufferings of the world and attain everlasting peace and happiness?

Sincerely struggle then toward the ideal of life, so long as you have strength of body and mind. By no means relax your efforts, saying that you will realize the ideal later or that it will be possible only through the Lord's grace. It is idlers alone that talk in this way. I do not want you to idle away your time. If you are not in earnest, speak out clearly. Say, "I have a desire to enjoy worldly pleasures. I have not a sincere longing to realize Truth—to attain God." Let your speech and your thought be one.

When are you going to do spiritual practices? The best part of life, as I told you, is from the sixteenth to the thirtieth year. Do you hope that after wasting these valuable years in useless pursuits, you will be able to take up spiritual practices in old age? Know that is cheating, deceiving oneself. Do not cheat yourselves. . . . Everyone wants happiness. Who likes to undergo pain and misery? But how to obtain that happiness? Certainly not by running after the fleeting pleasures of the senses and ignoring Him Who is the abode of all happiness. He has created many playthings to delude the human mind. Throw away all these and pray to Him. He will then hasten to take you in His arms.

I tell you, you have had play enough; it is high time now to give it up and call upon the Mother. When a child is fond of play, the mother gives it toys to while away its time. But the child that does not care for play she carries

about with her. Happy is the child that sits in the mother's lap. It not only enjoys the play but has also the happiness of the mother's company. The child that is engaged in play enjoys it no doubt, but also runs the risk of being hurt in its play. It may quarrel with its playmates and get beaten, but the child in its mother's lap has no such troubles. It is always happy and knows full well that the mother will take care of it and supply all its wants.

The parable of the mango grove told by Sri Ramakrishna is very instructive. "You have come to eat the mangoes. Why do you bother yourself about the number of trees, branches and leaves in the garden? Eat the mangoes and be satisfied." You have come into this world for the realization of God. Accomplish this object first of all and fulfill your life's mission. Solve your own problem and equip yourself for life's journey. Struggle hard and become deathless by tasting immortal bliss. Pray to Him day and night. Whatever the form in which you think of Him, it will certainly do you good. Whatever form or name appeals to you, take it sincerely and pray to Him. You are sure to get the vision of Him. Parvati once asked Mahadeva how *Sachchidananda* (Existence, Knowledge and Bliss Absolute) could be realized. The reply was, "Through faith."

You have been shown the right path. Follow it with faith, patience and perseverance. Waste no more time in discussing the forms and details of your *Sadhana* (spiritual practice). Pray to Him in any way you please, and you are sure to get His blessing. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, "Sweetened bread will taste sweet in whatever way you begin to eat it." You are, as it were, sitting under the *Kalpataru* (wish-yielding tree) and you will get whatever you ask for.

Do not think yourselves too clever. The crow thinks

itself very clever, but it lives on filth. Those who are too clever in this world get cheated in the long run.

With a faith that knows no wavering plunge yourselves in deep meditation. Do not get disheartened if after a little practice you do not realize God. The ocean is full of precious pearls, but you may not get them at the first dive. My boys, once again I enjoin you, have firm faith in the words of your *Guru* and try to get absorbed in deep meditation. Be sure, sooner or later, you will have a vision of the Lord.

Do not allow your mind to get distracted. Keep steadily and patiently to your *Sadhana*. His grace will descend on you in due time. Suppose you wish to see a great man. You have first to see and satisfy his attendants. Similarly, to obtain the grace of the Lord you have to seek the help of godly men and undergo many spiritual practices. Knowing Him to be dearer than the dearest, pray to Him with a yearning heart for His grace and vision.

Cry unto the Lord like a child. Incessant crying cannot but make the mother run to it. So also with the Lord. He reveals Himself to that one who unceasingly prays for His grace and vision.

Shake off your sleep and seek the grace of the Lord with steadfast devotion. Make the mind one-pointed like the mariner's compass. In whatever direction the ship may sail, the compass always points to the north, thus keeping the ship on its course. Even so with the human mind. If it is fixed on God, there will be nothing to fear. If by chance one is thrown into a bad environment, even then his faith and devotion will remain unshaken. The moment he hears any talk about God, he will become mad with Divine Love—just as the flint, lying under water for a hundred years, when taken out and struck, emits sparks.

Those who have been favored with a vision of the Lord

have their mind always fixed on Him. They will have no taste for anything except to talk of Him and to seek the company of holy men.

Like a fallen leaf tossed to and fro by the wind, be content to remain wherever you are placed by the Lord. Do not have any will or desire of your own.

Your mind is now pure and untainted. Try to keep it in this state always. The spotless mind is like a dry match stick. It ignites the moment you strike it, but it is of no use if it gets wet. You may go on striking it, but it will only break into pieces. Similarly, if the mind once becomes soiled, you will find it extremely difficult to restore it to its former purity.

SPIRITUAL AWARENESS

By Leo Tolstoy

(Selected from Tolstoy's "Reading for Every Day," as published for the first time in English by Dr. John Haynes Holmes in his magazine, "Unity," Chicago, Ill.)

It is well for a man to reflect upon what he is, with his body that seems to him so great compared with a flea, and so tiny compared with the earth. It is well for him to reflect further that all this earth of ours is but a grain of sand in comparison with the sun, and the sun nothing when compared with the star Sirius, and Sirius nothing to other greater stars, and so on without end. What is man with his body, compared to the sun and the stars? Nothing. And if we reflect moreover, that there was not a hint of any one of us, when hundreds and thousands of years ago men such as we lived here on earth, like us were born, grew up, became old and died, that of these millions upon millions of men who were the same as I am now, there remains not a bone nor even the dust of a bone; that after us millions upon

millions of men will live as we are living; that out of our dust the grass will grow, and sheep will eat the grass, and men the sheep, and of us will remain not a grain of dust, nor a memory—what are we then? Nothing.

We may be nothing, but this nothing understands itself and its place in the world. And if it understands, this understanding is not *nothing*, but something that is greater than all this infinite world and all this infinite time.

We can find no trace of earthly origin in souls. There is nothing composite in them, nothing that could arise from or be formed on earth, nothing akin to water, earth or fire. Neither in water, nor air, nor fire is there anything that has capacity to remember, to understand, to think, to retain the past, to glance into the future, to comprehend and give meaning to the present. Hence there is in each of us something distinct from all that is material, something that we call the spirit.

If a man understands that he lives not by the body but by the spirit, he will recognize this spirit in all that lives, and feel his unity with all living things.

If a man fails to see in his neighbor the same spirit that dwells in him, he is living as if in a dream. Only that man is awake and really living who sees and feels in his neighbor the same spirit that dwells in him.

The consciousness of our spirituality is salvation from all things. No matter what happens to a man who is conscious of his spirituality—evil cannot touch him.

There is no body so strong and healthy that it may never be ill, there are no riches that may not be lost, no power that may not come to an end. All this is precarious. If a man puts his life in being a healthy, rich, important person, even if he gets what he strives for, he will always be fretting, fearing and grieving because he will see how all that in which

he placed his life is departing from him, and how he himself is little by little growing old and approaching death.

What can you do to keep from worrying and fearing? There is only one way: put your life, not in that which passes away and perishes, but in that which does not and cannot perish—in the spirit that dwells in man.

"I shall do that when I grow up. I shall live thus when I finish my studies or when I marry. I shall manage thus—and so when I have children, when I have arranged a marriage for my son, or when I get rich, or when I move to another place."

Children and grown people and old people speak thus, but no one knows whether he will live until the evening. In all these matters we cannot know whether we shall have a chance to do them, or whether death will prevent our doing them.

There is only one thing with which death cannot interfere: death cannot interfere with our fulfilling, in each hour we live, the will of God—that we should love men.

There is no time. There is only *now*, this instant. And in it, in this instant, lies our whole life. Hence one must put all one's strength into this instant.

Love is the manifestation of the divine substance, for which there is no time. Hence love manifests itself only in the present, now—in each moment of the present.

Let us guess as much as we like about life in the future, but let love be inseparable from us in the present.

To make it easy to live with a man, think of what you have that is common to both of you, the same in both, and not of what you have that is separate and different.

Men's general way of life depends on their understanding of the law of God. With passage of time the law of God becomes ever simpler and clearer, ever more comprehensible

and more harmonious with true knowledge. And in the same measure that the law is made simpler and clearer, men become ever more and more united with each other.

I may understand my life in such a way as to think that I alone am really living, while round about me all sorts of other creatures seem to live—men, animals, insects and others. When I understand my life in this way, things are hard and terrifying, and, worst of all, I set up in my own soul a great store of ill-will toward all that is not myself. But it is also possible to understand my life so as to see that everything is really living, that the whole world is living precisely as I am, and that every creature is just as important to itself as I am to myself. And when I understand my life in this way, I want ever more and more to unite with all, I lay up in my soul an ever greater store of good-will toward all creatures, and I grow light at heart, unafraid.

The more conscious you are of your unity with God, with All, the more conscious you become of your unity with each separate manifestation of Him.

Things are hard for me or I am bored, lonely. But who ordered you to go away from all men and shut yourself up in the prison of your lone self?

People often think there is merit in living according to the will of God, in loving your neighbors. But there is no merit here. If you love your neighbor, you have not won merit in the sight of God, but God has given you what you do not deserve—the supreme felicity of love, and of union with Him through love.

Not by money or gifts or instruction, not even by labor, can men improve each other's lives, but only by love. There can be no virtue without love. And without love there can not be felicity.

False teachers draw men to the good life by frightening

them with threats of punishment and luring them with rewards in the other world where no one has been. But true teachers only teach that the essence of life—love—dwells in the souls of men, and that it is well with him who unites with it. If you serve God for the sake of eternal bliss, you are serving yourself, not God.

There was once a feeble-minded woman who became blind as a result of disease, but could never understand that she was blind. She would grow angry because, no matter where she went, everything would get in her way and push her. She thought that things pushed her, not that she bumped into them.

And it is just so when people are blind to the spiritual life. It seems to them that everything that happens to them is done on purpose to irritate. They get angry at people and do not understand that, like the feeble-minded woman, they are unhappy, not because others make them so, but because they are blind to the spiritual life, and live for the body.

If you have been angry at a man, this means that you were leading, not a divine but a physical life. If you lead a divine life, no one can offend you, because God cannot be offended; and God, that God who is within you, cannot be angry.

To make our relations with men always joyful, we must remember, when we meet with them, that the necessary and important thing is not what I need, and not what *that man* needs with whom I have to do, but what *that God* who dwells in both of us needs from us both. Just remember this when you have an unpleasant feeling toward people and it will pass off immediately.

Watch out lest you quarrel. Every word said to another in a discontented voice, every unkind glance—all this is no joking matter. With these trifles begin dissension which

spoils our lives more than anything else.

If you are angry, before doing or saying anything, count ten. If your anger has not cooled, count a hundred. If you remember this when you are angry, you won't have to count, because you will remember that if you are angry you must be silent. And after you have been silent for a while, you will wonder that you could have been angry at such trifles.

If a man offends you, you may respond to the offense as does a dog, a cow or a horse, by running away . . . or by snapping, butting or kicking back. But you may also respond to offense like a rational man by saying to yourself, "This man offended me. That is his affair; and mine is to do what I consider right."

Try to stop judging people and you will experience a feeling like that of a drunkard who has given up wine or a smoker who has abandoned tobacco—the same peculiarly pleasant feeling of cleanness, and at first the same occasional longings to return to the bad habit that has been abandoned.

Everyone has his own cross, his own yoke, not in the sense of a burden, but in the sense of the true life; and if we look on this cross, not as a burden but as true life, it will be easy for us to bear it. It is easy for us to bear it when we are meek, submissive, humble in heart; it is still easier when we renounce ourselves; easier yet when we bear this cross every hour, as Christ taught; and ever easier, if we forget ourselves in the work of the spirit, as we forget our selves in worldly works. The cross that is sent us, this is what we must work over, and our whole life lies in this work. If the cross be illness, bear it submissively; if it be offense from men, learn to return good for evil; if it be humiliation, be humble; if it be death, accept it with thankfulness.

THE SOUL'S CENTRE

By *Juan de Los Angeles*

(Spanish Franciscan monk, preacher and writer of the 16th century.)

God is, as it were, the centre of love, and to Him the weight of this same love draws every creature. So greatly is He to be loved that all creatures, both sensible and insensible, love Him in their several ways. What are the natural inclinations of things but love, by which they are drawn to God? Only through their imperfection do they fail to attain to the highest uncreated Good, and thus they stay and rest in created good, in that which is but a part of the highest good. What is gravity in a stone but love for the centre? What is lightness in fire but love for the heavens? That which all things desire is called Sovereign Good, and thus the natural desire which is in them may in some sort be called love, although, as we said before, insensible Nature, because of its imperfection, cannot reach, as man and the angels can, that incommutable Good which is God.

St. Augustine said eloquently that love was the gravity of his soul, and that he was drawn whithersoever it drew him. So that the stone finds its true place in the centre, and the centre of our soul is God. Ah, if we who are endowed with reason did but copy the irrational and senseless stones! A thing of wonder is it indeed to see a rock dislodged from a high mountain. With what fury and noise, with how great swiftness does it fall to the place that is furnished for its rest. All that meets it in its path it shatters and breaks, and without once staying in its course, it passes to its centre. A rock most powerful indeed was that which sped toward God so that its progress was retarded or impeded neither by distress nor famine, nor nakedness, nor persecution, nor sword, nor death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor strength,

nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature. Wondrous the gravitation, worthy of so pure and holy a soul as the Apostle's, that attracts it with such force, shattering all obstacles, till it reaches its centre, which is God. Here, O my soul, here shalt thou rest, as the fire rests in its heavens, as the stone at its centre. For otherwise than here is no rest; therefore, seek it not for thou shalt not find it. The arm that is disjointed from its place and articulation cannot be without pain and disquiet; neither so can the soul apart from God. . . . Who would not wonder at seeing an immense rock hanging in the air with nothing impeding its course? And how much greater a wonder is it to see a soul created by God suspended in the air of vanity, its course stayed by so slight a straw as a question of "honor" or some such worldly interest, being for this deprived of its highest good.

O divine Centre! O infinite Good that art of infinite attraction! What is it that restrains me from seeking Thee? What is it that stays my path? What that delays my course? Ah, how great is the attraction of sin, which weighs down our souls so that they may not rise to seek their true sphere, which is God! Ah, how intolerable is the burden of our flesh, how thick a veil it is, since it hides from us the face of God! What hinders me from tearing it down with my own hands that I may see and may rest in Him whom my soul loveth? O Thou Preserver of men! Why hast Thou set me as a mark against Thee, so that I am a burden to myself? Why dost Thou not take away my transgression and remove from me mine iniquity? Alas, that I go wandering so gladly among the creatures, seeking a few drops of muddy water, which cannot quench my thirst but rather excite and inflame it the more, while I leave that most clear and eternal Source of all Good, where alone my thirst may be quenched and where the hunger of my soul may be satisfied for its true Good, that shall abide for ever and ever!

RIGHT RESOLUTIONS

Book Review

(Reprinted from the "Tattwadodhini Patrika," published in India.)

This brochure is by Swami Paramananda of American fame. As an erudite scholar and a deep religious thinker, the name of Swami Paramananda has travelled beyond the confines of his country. The Swami is as well known in the East as in the West, and is a striking figure in American literary and religious circles. He is already the author of more than a score of religious works ranging over a variety of topics, such as Vedantic Idealism, Yoga and Christian Mysticism, etc. He is at once at home in both occidental and oriental systems of philosophy, therefore well-fitted to be an ideal interpreter of Eastern thought to Western minds. We must congratulate him on his latest contribution to the spiritual literature of the world. We must judge a work of this kind on its merits, not by its bulk or size. "Right Resolutions" is a small brochure indeed, but it is worth its weight in gold. A perusal of this booklet is sure to do one good.

If one is tempted to utter a falsehood he should, says the author, guard his tongue and repeat to himself:

"Truth is mightier than untruth,
Truth is my strength,
Truth is my safeguard,
Truth is ever triumphant,
I am armed with Truth."

We can safely recommend the book to the public.

SPECIAL NOTICE

Subscribers to the "Message of the East" who desire their copies to be forwarded to their summer address, kindly notify the Manager, Message of the East, 32 Fenway, Boston, Mass.

REPORT

ANANDA-ASHRAMA, CALIFORNIA

During the prolonged absence of Swami Paramananda in April and May, all the Services and Classes have been faithfully conducted by Sister Daya. The special event during the month was the Birthday Celebration of Lord Buddha at the Temple of the Universal Spirit. It was full-moon night and the Ashrama has never looked more beautiful, as everywhere were seen white blossoms as if the hilltops rejoiced that a great Light was born into this world to dispel the darkness and unhappiness by the law of love and by the power of *Ahimsa*—non-injury and non-killing. The many friends who gathered on the Ashrama hilltop to participate in the celebration went away with fresh impetus after they had listened to the inspiring words about the great Teacher, feelingfully expressed by Sister Daya.

VEDANTA CENTRE OF BOSTON

A similar celebration to observe the birthday of Lord Buddha took place at the Boston Centre. The beautiful statue of Lord Buddha was placed on the platform surrounded by Spring flowers of various hues, and apple blossoms. Many gathered to pay their homage to the great spiritual Light of love and compassion. Swami Paramananda built up his discourse on the great theme of Lord Buddha's life and teaching: "Hatred is not conquered by hatred at any time but it is always conquered by love." After the Service a reception was held in the Italian Room and "Lord Buddha's pudding" was served in honor of the occasion. The celebration continued through Sunday and at both Services, at eleven in the morning and at eight in the evening, Swami Paramananda gave some significant thoughts from Lord Buddha's teaching.

BENEFIT CONCERT

A benefit concert was arranged by the many loving friends

of Srimati Charushila Devi, for the purpose of raising funds to aid her educational work for young women in India. Many friends responded and a beautiful program was given by Miss Florence Colby, Mr. Alan Hay and Mr. David Leight. At the request of the artistes Srimati Gayatri Devi sang a Bengali song for the occasion.

A recent letter just received from Srimati Charushila Devi gives a vivid account of how her work of selfless devotion is spreading and is recognized by people and the press, both in India and even as far as Burmah. "It is drawing attention from all parts of the country even from Burma, people are enquiring and showing their eagerness to come. Many are asking when Swamiji (Swami Paramananda) would be here. Some are asking for his books, some want to know about subscription to the MESSAGE. . . . I am sitting in the big hall, on a rug woven by the Ashramites, being surrounded by the girls who are studying. There is an electric light but that being too high I am using a candle. Can you picture us—a happy group at the feet of the Lord? A big room with very little furniture, which will be used as a dormitory after a few minutes!"

INVITATION

On June 18th, Saturday afternoon, the Cohasset Ananda-Ashrama will celebrate the third anniversary of its establishment. There will be a special Service in the Nature's Sanctuary at four o'clock, and at five-thirty a Hindu dinner will be served in honor of the occasion. There will be a Sunset Service on the Rock and it being full-moon night the Swami hopes that many of the friends will be able to enjoy the quiet beauty of the Ashrama in the early evening hour.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Swami Paramananda expects to return to California and resume charge of all the activities there early in July. He will remain there throughout the summer. Those who are desirous of spending their vacation at the Ashrama Guest House or in the summer cottages during the Swami's stay will please communicate with the Ananda-Ashrama, La Crescenta, Los Angeles County, California.

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"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES." Rig-Veda

VEDANTA MONTHLY **GIFT**
JUL 23 1932

Message of the East



JULY, 1932

Cosmic Consciousness

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Message of the East

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."

—Ezekiel

"Light shall come again from the East."

—Tyndall

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COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS

By Swami Paramananda



SUCCESS in spiritual study depends on how well we can fix and focus our mind, and upon the attributes of our mind. It is not just a mechanical practice—this mental focusing—a period of silence for the purpose of gathering together our forces, although the average person may look on it as such, nor is it the result of calculation or of how much intellectually we may know. It is a question of quality. If our mind is tranquil and receptive, if it possesses certain essential elements, then not only are we able to enter the realm of higher thought, but we may succeed in exploring there, in penetrating ever deeper and deeper into that kingdom. The intelligence which is now ours, through which we are able to perceive the things of this world, that same intelligence, when properly unfolded, enables us to perceive the greater realities even as we now do the small and trivial objects of the sense plane. I must remind you of these facts in relation to our theme of Cosmic Consciousness. Within our own self, within our own being, we possess that which all great souls covet,—a light which illumines everything and makes all things clear.

Very soon after I came to this country, Dr. Buck's book on Cosmic Consciousness was published, and I remember what a tremendous sensation it created. It contained examples

of men who, to the author's mind, had touched this higher state of being, and I remember how people brought the book to me, a little skeptical, yet inclined to be interested intellectually and otherwise. Soon everyone was talking of Cosmic Consciousness, and it was not long before this country was over-run with psychologists and so-called "men of wisdom," who offered to sell it at so much a lesson. But Cosmic Consciousness cannot be bought in the market-place: it is something we unfold.

When I say that we cannot buy Cosmic Consciousness in the market-place, I do not mean that we cannot acquire it. Everyone knows what the word "cosmic" means—that which includes everything; therefore Cosmic Consciousness is that consciousness, possessing which, we come to possess the unlimited. The basic idea is this:

As normal human beings we are aware of certain things. Our knowledge may not be absolute, it may not be free from error, nevertheless we have within us the possibilities of a knowledge that is absolute. Our ordinary consciousness can be developed. The same mind, the same power, by means of which we know the lesser world, can be evolved so as to bring us in contact with the greater. It does not mean that suddenly we come upon or accidentally obtain something other than what we already have. It does not mean that, my friends. It means that what is already ours we unfold from within; but the instrumentality has to be suitable.

This, our mind, when clear, concentrated, unbiassed and unmixed, is able to perceive things almost with prophetic vision, but when it is disturbed, agitated or clogged, everything appears to it as distorted. Great souls have often compared a troubled mind to a small body of water into which someone has thrown a stone, thereby stirring up the mud. When the mud is stirred up, naturally the water is no longer

clear; nothing within it is visible, nor can one see the bottom. Just so is it with us when we keep on holding anxious thoughts: the whole surface of our mind is agitated and becomes incapable of reflecting the true Image. That is the reason why the average mind, which has the possibility of correct perception, is unable to perceive correctly, and that is why we need to look to the mind.

The Hindus have rather an extraordinary concept: they hold that within every human being there is coiled up a force which they call the Kundalini, the basic energy. When that is released, the individual finds himself in possession of a power that is inexhaustible. This power does not release itself by chance. In some cases, in fact in most cases, those who are conscious in a cosmic sense, seldom know that they possess it. Its coming is as natural and as spontaneous as is the opening of a flower when it blossoms. One is really not aware. There is no noise, no ostentation. On the contrary, the real unfoldment occurs when the individual is seeking nothing for himself. It is a very difficult subject to explain intellectually, because Cosmic Consciousness causes us to rise altogether away and aloof from ordinary concepts. It carries us to a province beyond the pale of human self-limitation and brings us face to face with realities which at the present moment we do not care to recognize or accept, although we may declare our faith in religion. Only when we have known, felt, seen and directly perceived are we convinced of all that pertains to the consciousness of the Self or what we call Higher Consciousness. In India they describe it by the Sanskrit term *Samadhi*. A man in that state becomes oblivious, often seemingly dead to, the physical, but completely aware of that loftier realm and its reality.

In that great Hindu classic, the Bhagavad-Gita, it is said: "That which is right to all beings, therein the self-subjugated

remains awake, and that wherein all beings are awake, that is night for the knower of Self." In other words, on the sense plane where you find relentless activity and where people suffer and struggle and feel they know so much, from there the wise withdraw, because they see the futility of it all and are no longer interested. But in the spiritual realm, which seems to the ordinary human being divided from him as if by a veil, the wise are active and energetic. Some there are who, even when the whole world sleeps, remain wide awake engaged in thought and meditation. At the present moment our mind is so completely centred on the trivial and the petty that it does not care to find its access into the Vast and the Unbounded.

The thing is, we cannot be conscious of something that we do not want to be conscious of. There are many people who desire things out of curiosity. With the higher state of being, however, it is not a question of just wanting—as you would say, "I want wealth! I want power!" We have to have a profound yearning—we have to have the fitness. For according to the fitness, Cosmic Consciousness comes.

In India, the great psychologists worked out systematically and scientifically the connection of the mind with certain centres in the human body, which cause it to assume certain roles. As an example, when the mind is focused on the lower centres, its tendency is food, drink, sleep, sense-pleasures. Perhaps we indulge in gossip, in all manner of things which have no importance, because our mind is stooping down to the level of these things. On the other hand, one who is highly cultured, who has more intellectual interests, will turn away from gossip and all such matters, for his mind has taken a different course. There is, however, a level higher than the intellectual and the aesthetic. There are individuals who live in a purely spiritual world. They like best to think

on spiritual matters, to hear men talk about God and our connection with Him, and who appreciate and enjoy this deeper contact with as much keenness as the man bent on sense experience enjoys sense objects. They live in another atmosphere, that is all; their mind is connected with a higher centre.

This does not mean that we can perform an operation and disclose this centre here and that centre there. These matters are subtle; they lie beyond the reach of ordinary methods. You may say, "I will not believe until I see." That is your great misfortune. The trouble is we want to prove spiritual truths by material means. They can be proved, but only through spiritualizing the mind, and that means individual effort, individual endeavor, individual practice, and dedication.

We have the power to change our mental focus. Mind forms habits; also it is very susceptible to outer influences—it takes their tincture. A piece of white cloth, if a corner of it accidentally drops into some dye, immediately assumes that color. So also with us. We come in contact with a man of genius and at once we take on the coloring of his mind. We hear him talk, receive his impression, as it were, and are given a tremendous stimulus. Similarly, when we associate with a man who is despondent or of evil propensities, if we are not positive enough, we take on his mental coloring. We can, however, become so strong, so fixed in the higher centres of our being, that nothing can impose its influence on us if we do not desire it. And how do we become strong? By thinking and rethinking and constantly thinking of that which is strong, spiritual and exalted. Only in this way can the mind be lifted—never accidentally.

We cannot say that anything is an accident. All the tragedies that are taking place in the world, if we have the power to analyze, do not take place because of accident. People mould their lives; they are constantly forming their

own mental concepts, and these mental concepts grow ever more real and living and finally determine the state of their consciousness. Cosmic Consciousness is, for the one who experiences it, a stupendous reality. Our consciousness may now be full of error, of limitation, but when we make our connection, affiliate ourselves with the Unbounded, our mind becomes possessor in a definite way, of that which is inexhaustible.

Let us take an immediate case, one that is interesting because it illustrates so well a saying of a very great mystic, Jacob Boehme: "I am not collecting my knowledge from letters and books, but I have it within my own Self; because heaven and earth with all their inhabitants and moreover God Himself is in man." Let us take the case of Sri Ramakrishna. Sri Ramakrishna used to say: "O mind, stay in your own house—stay within your own dwelling! What is the use of running hither and thither, searching, and squandering your energy?" Of course, in the mystic sense, what he said was: "Don't have all this restlessness. Look within your own mind; there you will find what you are seeking!" and he verified it.

There is, as I said, no accident. It may happen that a person excited or enkindled may for an instant arouse that divine energy within himself so that a certain amount flows through him, but one who has found his access into that higher realm experiences this mighty power on all occasions. The reason we feel impoverishment is because we have cut ourselves off from that Source. We can make again our connection, though not through mechanical means. Great souls have done so, and what other souls have done, we can do. It is all a question of valuation. What do you love most? Mind follows the desire—upward or downward. It can become so attached to the lower centres that it no longer perceives what is sublime

and high. It stands in its own light, so to speak. Light is always coming from above, but we shadow it. The object that we are trying to study, the problem we are seeking to solve we obscure by our mental attitude. For instance, a person with broken faith, bent down in tragic posture, wherever he looks he discerns only the shadow of his own distorted self. When he lifts his head, however, when he changes his mental gaze, at once he beholds everything in the light.

Perhaps you are skeptical. You may think: "He is trying to give us a little sophistry." It is not sophistry; it is fact. Our mind can lift us way up to heaven and also it can cast us down to the most hideous state of suffering. Everything exists in the mind. It is not, I repeat, through accident that we find our exaltation, happiness and fulfillment, our plenitude and our strength—never through accident. It is through the continued control and direction of the mind. Therefore, from every point of view, the study of the mind is the most vital study for man.

Knowledge is what we all want to acquire. The business man wants it, one who desires to advance along any line wants it, because knowledge is power. But where lies the key to knowledge? The only key which we hold and can handle is the key of our own mind. If the mind is clogged, undecided, dimmed, then we never find that key, and the door of knowledge remains closed to us.

Among the Indian legends there is a parable illustrating this. It concerns the Great God Shiva and His consort, the Great Goddess. As these two were passing over the earth, they beheld a wretched mortal who, through ill fortune and his own attitude, had lost his faith in everything. With head bowed, he was walking along in the depths of despair. According to the parable, the Goddess—tender, merciful, said to Lord Shiva, the One who does good to all beings: "O Lord,

why do you not remove this person's misery?" And He said: "I cannot." And she said: "That is impossible; you can do anything." "No," He replied, "mortals sometimes stand in their own light. I will prove it to you. This man is seeking wealth. Very well, I shall place a bag of gold in his path." Immediately a bag filled full of golden coins was laid before his pathway. But he, disgusted with everything, suddenly closed his eyes, saying: "I do not even want to look on this wretched world!" and so he passed by the gold without seeing it. In the same way, do we not often pass by opportunities, owing to our mental blindness and distorted notions?

When we are unaware of our divine heritage, the outside world plays havoc with us. For instance, hold the thought that you are evil and see how much evil will fall upon you. Take an attitude of dejection and note how quickly the whole of your mental horizon will become darkened. Then enter the arena of life with another point of view,—with hope, aspiration and faith, and observe how all things will pave the way toward that higher realization. The fact is, we see this world as we allow ourselves to see it. But what makes one see it as ugly, another as beautiful? Why is it that a great personage in his moment of exaltation exclaims: "Verily, this whole world is full of God!" while in the same spot someone else will cry: "This world holds nothing but evil?" Perhaps we can explain it in this way—when the mind is turned downward, then a man perceives nothing but the sordid facts of life; he sees reality only in the small, impermanent, changing, shifting conditions; while the mind that is directed upward is more conscious of what is beneficent, abiding, and finds reality there.

Here you will say: "How can we deny the things we see?" You cannot deny them; you can learn to see them differently. It is not that we have to struggle to deny, we simply change

our angle of vision. We cannot centre our consciousness on the finite and the petty and at the same time hope for the unfoldment of that which relates us to the Infinite. There lies our trouble today: we want everything and we are willing to sacrifice nothing. Even the things that are not good for us, the bondages, even these we are not willing to give up. How then can we hope for Cosmic Consciousness?

The cosmic energy, when it is set into motion, breaks all barriers; it awakens us from slumber; it quickens the spirit of man. And it achieves these results silently. Never in my life have I heard so much noise about Cosmic Consciousness as during these last few years in America. Those who really find their access into this exalted state express it quite differently. In India, a land where people frequently have attained it, you hear very little talk about it. It is so stupendous, vast, that there is no language to describe it. Walt Whitman says: "When I undertake to tell the best, I find I cannot; my tongue is ineffectual on its pivots; my breath will not be obedient to its organs: I become a dumb man." The Vedic Upanishads describe it as being "beyond mind and speech." This does not mean that men of vision lack the power of expression, it means that as we recognize Infinitude we cannot define it by words. We may sing hymns and formulate speculations, yet it remains ever untold.

According to Sri Ramakrishna, this consciousness can be reached only when the individual ego, the self, is put to sleep. The thought of this may frighten you, just as some people were frightened when they came into Sri Ramakrishna's presence, for he lived practically in that transcendent state, and even when he came down to the ordinary sense levels, he brought with him the atmosphere of that vaster realm. Do not, however, think that this made him unfit for every-day living. It did not. And in this connection let me give you a story:

Once a young disciple came to stay with Sir Ramakrishna and, as was the custom, they went together to bathe in the Ganges. The devotee took with him a water-jar and a towel, but left them behind. On their return, Sri Ramakrishna asked him what he had done with them. He said: "I forgot them. My spiritual devotions drove them completely out of my mind." He thought this would make a tremendous impression. But that great saint, Sri Ramakrishna, replied: "You forgot? For many years I have lived in a condition of spiritual ecstasy, at times losing all physical consciousness, yet I have never forgotten a single thing."

These words are a warning. Many believe that when they grow a little visionary, absent-minded, or unregardful of what is immediately before them, it is a sign of inner progress. Let me tell you this: when there is actual progress, your perceptions grow keener, your commonsense more uncommon and your attitude toward the world around you, a thousand times more wakeful than before.

We must never confuse high realization with the egotistic sense. We must find the true Self. But that true Self, what is it? Is it the body? Is it these senses? Or is it the eyes, ears, mind, brain? Our present feeling of self-importance is an egotistic notion and instead of helping us is more likely to hinder. Egotism stands between man and God, and that is why Sri Ramakrishna declares that until that is wiped out, man cannot make his contact with Divinity. Often in the Scriptures we find utterances which appear like direct contradictions. For instance, that Christ note—"Thy Will be done!"—seems the opposite of His statement—"I and my Father are one." The first signifies surrender, the second, self-recognition; yet we must realize that both mean the same thing. We surrender to the Highest and finally come to identify ourselves with that Highest. In neither case is there

room for the little self, the ego, the "I and mine." That consciousness is altogether eliminated. We give up everything and find at every turn an inexhaustible Source from which we can draw.

Why has the average mind so little strength? Because it has weakened itself. It should be like a single thread; instead, it has become like a lot of fibres. We can, however, gather up these fibres of our mind—our poor, distracted mind—going this way and that way in countless different directions, and draw them into one; just as sometimes we put together many pieces of thread and twist them into a rope that is gigantic in its power of resistance. At the present moment our mental forces are divided and dissipated; we can command only a small portion of them; but when they are made into one whole, twisted and combined like a rope, they become for us a unit of tremendous power.

If at the present moment this seems to be beyond you, do not allow yourself to be dejected. Do not say: "It is not for me; I never can hope to accomplish it." We must guard our mind against this tendency to go downward. Going downward does not mean necessarily indulging in sense-pleasure or any definite form of evil. It may mean dejection or any negative tendency brought about through brooding or self-pity.

Lift the mind up! Even though it may fall down many times—lift it up! The Hindus feel that one of the best means for doing this is association with the holy. First, though, we must learn to know who is holy and who unholy. When we come in contact with men who are dedicated, consecrated, we find a tremendous amount of solace: the strong focused atmosphere which they create is very, very helpful. We must learn to create such an atmosphere. If instead of spending our leisure hours talking about our little failures and successes,

our triumphs and disappointments, we would turn our thoughts into an entirely different channel, we would form a new world for ourselves. This may happen through necessity, because a man cannot keep his head and meet the many problems which confront him, unless he learns to draw from that unbounded Consciousness which alone can shed light upon his path. Man may possess wealth, he may have power, he may have all these things, but to what avail if he lacks wisdom, if he lacks the one Light? India realized this and that is why in that land there are so many who are willing to give up everything in order to find the light. It has become their passion. As Dr. Buck says: "There is a mental state so happy, so glorious, that all the rest of life is worthless compared to it, a pearl of great price, to buy which a wise man willingly sells all that he has. This state can be achieved."

There comes a time when fervor like this enters into our soul. Then we cannot be contented with small spiritual gains. We seek and seek with ever greater yearning and concentration. The matter is, once we have had the real taste of spiritual bliss we can never abandon our quest. That is why truth seekers are so oblivious of all else and at times appear as if were intoxicated or mad because they have no other thought but of their chosen ideal. This tremendous zeal and one-pointedness of purpose quicken their intuition—a most valuable asset always to the attainment of Cosmic Consciousness.

Someone asked Sri Ramakrishna how Christ was able to endure the actual physical pain on the cross as he did. He answered it through the following parable: When the coconut is unripe the whole thing—kernel, pulp and shell—is bound together so that it is very difficult to separate them, but after it ripens the kernel separates itself from the external shell. They become like two different objects. Finally one rolls freely within the other and can be detached from it with-

out any difficulty. Same way was it with Christ or with one who has attained the Supreme Consciousness. His soul life is ever detached from the physical and therefore he can so easily transcend the afflictions of body and mind and this is truly the most vivid picture of Cosmic Consciousness.

Intellectually we may understand it to a certain extent, but intellectual understanding does not save us from suffering or sorrow caused by the onslaught of the world. We are like the parrot who is able to sing sacred songs and repeat holy names till the cat goes after him. Then he forgets his texts and can only scream in his own parrot tongue. So do we forget, until our knowledge of that great Immensity has become real. Then actually we enter that realm and our entire being is transformed. Finding That which is vast and unlimited and knowing our connection with It, all fear of loss is done away with forever.

Who can give an idea of this tremendous subject? Speech melts into nothingness. Therefore to express it, we have to reverse the usual order. Silence instead of speech; humble living instead of boisterous, restless seeking. "How are we going to reach this?" the restless world will ask. There comes a stage in our struggle when spontaneously we grow silent. Have you never found yourself sitting watching a sunrise or sunset—all alone, quiet—the whole world forgotten? And at that time did not something seem to unfold? Was there not something born in you?—a different kind of experience, an oblivion, a self-forgetfulness—a forgetfulness of all your surroundings, so that nothing existed but a reality which you could not define or describe? Well, just in this way, the great Ideal, the great Power is born within the soul, and once we have contacted it, never more can we be bound. A passage from the Sacred Upanished tells us that: when that unfolds within us, everything becomes clear, all the knots of our mind

and heart are cut asunder, all our doubts are destroyed. Everything that is dark or confused in our life or the life of the world vanishes when we come face to face with that great Light.

Look for it! hope for it! and never stop until you have found it. Shall we be satisfied with a partial glimpse, partial knowledge, partial understanding, when there is this craving for fulness of life, and of happiness. Other things do not matter. We must not accept any defeat. We must go on until we come to That which illumines the individual existence—until we come into the full glow of that mighty Effulgence.

When this great light bursts forth upon our soul it transforms our life and our entire consciousness expands with a newness of vision and aspiration which cannot be described by mere words. It is a thing to be known, it is a thing to become. It is indeed the fulfillment of the great Vedic utterance: "He has become It." No longer can our life be severed even for an instant from that overwhelming reality which is ever present, which is all in all, without which there is no life, there is no consciousness, there is no existence.

Through all the diversities of the world the one in us is threading its course towards the one in all; this is its nature and this is its joy. But by that devious path it could never reach its goal if it had not a light of its own by which it could catch the sight of what it is seeking in a flash. . . .

We cannot attain the Supreme Soul by successive additions of knowledge acquired bit by bit even through all eternity, because He is One, He is not made up of parts; we can only know Him as Heart of our hearts and Soul of our soul; we can only know Him in the love and joy we feel when we give up our self and stand before Him face to face.

—*Rabindranath Tagore.*

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Kabir says: "I have attained the unattainable, and my heart is colored with the color of love."

—*Song of Kabir.*

Deep in the depth of my soul

Call even in sleep

Unto the depths of God;

Which is the deeper deep?

—*Angelus Silesius.*

I put off darkness and clothed myself in light.

—*Odes of Solomon.*

How lovely, how magnificent a state is the soul of man in, when the life of God inactuating her, shoots her along with Himself through heaven and earth; makes her unite with and, after a sort, feel herself animate the whole world. He that is here looks upon all things as One, and on himself, if he can then mind himself, as a part of the Whole.

—*Henry More.*

Often having been awakened from the body to my true Self, and having come to be outside of all other things, but within myself, I saw a marvelous light and beauty; then there came over me an absolute certainty that my destiny was a great one.

—*Plotinus.*

He who is in the Fire, and He who is in the Heart, and He who is in the Sun, are all One and the Same, and he who knows this becomes one with the One.

—*Maitrayana Upanishad.*

There is joy unspeakable in the company of the Lord. Word proceeding out of the mouth cannot tell of it. He alone knoweth who hath felt it.

—*Sri Ramakrishna.*

THE VISION OF ECSTASY

From the Confessions of St. Augustine

(A communion between SS. Augustine and Monnica, his mother, immediately prior to her death.)

The day now approaching when she was to depart this life—which day Thou knewest but we not—it came to pass—Thyself, as I believe, by Thy secret ways so ordering it—that she and I stood alone, leaning in a certain window which looked on the garden of the house wherein we lodged at Ostia; for there before our voyage we were resting in quiet from the fatigues of a long journey. Discoursing then together alone very sweetly, and forgetful of the past, and reaching forth into those things which are before, we were enquiring between ourselves in the presence of the Truth, which Thou art, of what sort the eternal life of the saints may be, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man. And all the while did our hearts within us gasp after the heavenly streams of Thy fountain, the well of Life, which is in Thee, that being sprinkled thence according to our measure, we might in some sort meditate on so high a mystery.

And as our talk was leading us thither where we would be, so that no delight of the senses whatsoever, in any brightness possible to them, seemed in respect of the joy of that life worthy of mention, far less of comparison, we upraising ourselves with intenser desire unto that Self-same, went on to explore in turn all things material, even the very heaven, whence sun and moon and stars give light upon the earth: and thus ascending by meditation and speech and admiration of Thy works, we were drawing yet nearer, and had come to our own minds, and left them behind, that we might arrive at the country of unfailing plenty, where Thou feedest Thy people forever in pastures of Truth; there where life is the

WISDOM by which all those Thy works are made, that have been or that shall be. Wisdom uncreate, the same now as it ever was, and the same to be forevermore. Nay rather to have been and hereafter to be cannot be spoken of it, but only to be, since it is eternal. . . . Of that heavenly Wisdom as then we talked and hungered after it, lo, with the whole effort of our heart we apprehended somewhat thereof: and we sighed, and abandoning on that far shore those first fruits of the spirit, we fell back to the sound of our own voices, and the determinate words of human discourse. . . .

And we began to say: If to any the tumult of the flesh were hushed; hushed the images of earth, of waters and of air; hushed also the poles of heaven; yea, were the very soul to be hushed to herself, and by not thinking on self to surmount self; hushed all dreams and imaginary revelations, every tongue and every sign; if all transitory things were hushed utterly—for to him that heareth they do all speak, saying “We made not ourselves, but He made us, who abideth forever;” if, when their speech had gone out, they should suddenly hold their peace, and to the ear which they had aroused to their Maker, He Himself should speak, alone, not by them, but by Himself, so that we should hear His word, not through any tongue of flesh, nor Angel’s voice, nor echo of thunder, nor in the dark riddle of a similitude, but might hear indeed Him, whom in these things we love, Himself without these—as we but now with effort and in swift thought touched on that eternal Wisdom, which abideth over all—; could this be continued, and all disturbing visions of whatever else be withdrawn, and this one ravish and absorb, and wrap up its beholder amid these inward joys, so that life might ever be like that one moment of understanding, which but now we sighed after; were not this ENTER THOU INTO THE JOY OF THY LORD?

A GREAT TEACHER OF INDIA

By Sister Devamata

(Reprinted from the "Vedanta Kesari")

The real portrayal of Swami Ramakrishnananda was given in my book, "Days in an Indian Monastery" and in my subsequent volume, "Sri Ramakrishna and His Disciples," but these portraits were drawn with long brush-strokes, eliminating all that had not universal appeal for West and East alike. As the perspective lengthens, however, and the living figure grows dim, each discarded detail gains new value and demands recording. This is the reason for these belated memories. They are offered as gleanings from the field, gathered up after the main harvest has been garnered.

My close association with Swami Ramakrishnananda counts among my most precious Indian memories. Apart from our official relation as superior and member of the rank and file in the Religious Order to which we both belonged, the warmest friendship existed between us—a friendship mellowed on my side by profound reverence and on his side by a mother-solicitude for my well-being. He shared the riches of his thought and living with me unstintingly and gave me a most generous confidence. When a turn of circumstance forced me to open a letter bearing his name and I explained the incident to him, his reply was: "You are free to open all my letters. I have no secrets from you."

No words define more aptly Swami Ramakrishnananda than those of Lord Gouranga, "Lower than a blade of grass, with endurance like a tree, seeking not honor, but giving honor to all." He possessed an uplifted quality in his bearing, a mightiness of stride, which by the unknowing could be interpreted as haughtiness; but in reality he was the humblest of men. Humility was fundamental with him. It was more than mere absence of pride. It sprang from complete self-

forgetting. There was no place in his consciousness for anything but his Master. What St. Paul declared in his Epistle to the Galatians—"Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me"—described perfectly Swami Ramakrishnananda's attitude toward himself and toward that one whom he called Guru. He was dead wholly to himself and alive only in Sri Ramakrishna.

His coming and going, his eating and sleeping, his labor and his teaching, his entire living, took their rise in the will of the Master, never in his own desire or convenience. Those who saw him carry his Master's picture—pressed close to his heart, his body bent over it for protection, as he walked through the rain from the carriage to the entrance of the new Math at Mylapore, when he moved the Shrine there from the Ice House,* could appreciate the tenderness of love, the power of devotion for his Guru, which transfused his being. He could say of his Master as truly as did St. Paul of his, "The life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith in the Son of God."

His feeling was shown in these words spoken to me one day: "If we are caught in a labyrinth and someone comes and says, 'I can show you the way out,' what should we do? Follow him. And the gratitude we feel is what we call worship and devotion. This person is the Guru and we should follow him implicitly, if we want to escape from the labyrinth. Sometimes, however, we think: 'Why should I follow him? Let me find my own way.' So we go off by ourselves. But he is always so patient and loving that he waits until we grow weary trying to find the way alone and come back to him.

"The work of the Guru is done in a very few minutes," he said again as we sat together one evening in the Math at Mylapore. "By a few simple words the Guru gives a new

*Built as an Ice House, it was converted into a dwelling. The Swamis were given the use of the basement.

turn to the life—just as when a man is riding a bicycle, someone sees that the road he is taking will lead to danger, so he turns him round and starts him in another direction. The man keeps on pedalling as before and the bicycle keeps on moving, but now the man is moving away from danger instead of toward it. Similarly the Guru sees that the direction you have taken is dangerous, so he turns you round. All your activities may go on as before, you may keep on pedalling just the same, but now you are riding in a safe direction. The Guru's work is to give the turn in the right direction."

Swami Ramakrishnananda was too essentially a disciple in spirit to take the position of Guru. He had many devoted followers, but he never spoke of them or thought of them as disciples. Nor was he willing to assume the direction of a life. He gave encouragement, hope, ready forgiveness for failures and mistakes, but he believed it was good for a man to solve his own problems and make his own decisions. He set a very high standard for those about him. He expected them to face situations like men,—no whining or complaining, no striking back when rebuked, no idleness, no weakness and no giving up the fight. "Man is a hero so long as he struggles," were his own words.

Above all, the Swami gave no quarter to egotism or selfishness. To him spirituality meant self-abandonment. Those who were leading the spiritual life must make no compromises with the ego. "When man asserts himself in man, he commits all sorts of atrocities," he once declared to me. "When God asserts Himself in a man, then the man is good, pure and virtuous. It is true that every soul, so long as it is in a body, has a little bit of ego. If there were no ego there would be no soul; for take away the ego and what remains? Only God.

"A Sannyasin can never afford to be selfish. He should be as willing to help his worst enemy as he is to serve his best

friend. It is for this we have become Sannyasins—to bring help to every living being without regard to what he does or does not do to us.”

One evening several visitors were gathered with the Swami in the hall of the old Mylapore Math. I too happened to be present. Someone spoke of a certain Sannyasin who had exceptional strength and vigor, but spent little of it in service to others. Swami Ramakrishnananda remarked with a note of scorn in his tone: “It is easy for the selfish man to be strong and healthy. Perhaps it is raining, and someone comes to say such and such a man is ill with fever. The selfish man says: ‘It would not be prudent for me to go out in the rain. I might fall ill myself. Tell him I am sorry, but I cannot come. When it stops raining I may come!’ The unselfish man tucks his cloth up, wraps a chuddar around his shoulders, and hurries out through the rain to the sick man, not stopping to calculate risk or discomfort. Swami Vivekananda, if he heard a friend was suffering from fever, would rush out and go to him even in the worst storm. He was willing to give his life to save the life of another. A selfish man will not venture out in stormy weather even if his own wife is ill. He says: ‘If she dies, I can always marry again; but if I die, who will marry?’ Such a man is sure to enjoy good health.

“So long as we are selfish our work must be fruitless. We may deliver fine lectures, we may gain name and fame, but the actual results will be nil. The moment, however, our little self disappears, at that moment our real work begins. Then we may live an obscure life and go nowhere, but we shall accomplish wonders.

“When we drop the ego from our consciousness and live in God, we have unlimited power. God is the only existence that is real, all other existences are unrealities behind which God exists as the reality. This *Maya* (illusion) is so irresistible

ble, and it is this *Maya* which makes us selfish. Only when God is gracious to us can we lift the veil and get a glimpse of Him. Then all selfishness drops off.

"The word 'selfishness' is not always understood. When by 'self' I understand the body or the little self and I do something for that self, I am selfish. But there is a Self which is beyond this physical body; when I do something for that Self, that is worshipping God. The man who lives in that higher Self is never selfish. Try to feel God inside yourself and you will overcome all selfishness. When you live constantly in the presence of Divinity, the ego loses its power; but so long as the ego rules a man, he is a bond-slave. All your anxieties and worries come from egotism and selfishness. Let go your little self and they will all disappear."

To find favor in Swami Ramakrishnananda's eyes one had to be genuine. The Swami showed little patience with the Pharisaical type of spirituality that "fasts to be seen of men." For a time there was a boy at the Mylapore Math whom I liked very much. He had a pleasant disposition and a friendly manner. Swami Ramakrishnananda was kind to him and seldom rebuked him, but accepted very little service from him. I wondered at it. Only later did I understand. One early morning the boy left the Math and did not return. He was tired of work and wished to meditate. Swami Ramakrishnananda smiled and said: "He will not go far in the religious life. He is not sincere. When he claimed to be fasting, he would slip off by himself and eat something; and when after his bath he would sit in meditation, he would lie down on his mat and sleep. He thought I did not know. That way you cannot get anywhere. You must be genuine if you would advance in the spiritual life. You may cheat a man for a time, but you cannot cheat God. Nor can you deceive the world for long. Your face, your tone, your manner will betray."

(To be continued)

INDIA, MY MOTHER!

By Swami Paramananda

India, my Mother!
What offering can I lay at Thy feet?
My heart is full of yearning.
Thou hast poured upon my life
Thy endless blessing.
In moments of darkness
The Lamp of Truth that ever burns in Thy Shrine
Has shown me it is but a passing shadow—
Maya, unreal.
How oft Thy voice of tender Mother-love
Hath whispered in my ear:
“Be brave, my son—
Be brave and fear not!
All this too will pass;
Only Truth shall stay
Forever and ever more.”

Ah! Thy benign countenance,
Alike in storm and calm,
Is my sole guide,
My unfailing pole-star.
Sweet Mother, I beg Thy blessing now.
In this hour of communion
Do Thou make me strong of heart
That I may meet all things
That life bringeth to my door,
Good or ill,
Knowing always in my inmost heart
That Thou art always the Giver,
My divine Dispenser,
And what Thou givest is my eternal good.

TRUTH IS ONE

By Maud Keck

(Thoughts inspired by a moonlight Service at Ananda-Ashrama, La Crescenta, California.)

"May He who is the Jehovah of the Jews, Father in Heaven of the Christians, Allah of the Mohammedans and Buddha of the Buddhists . . ." and then for a second the voice paused. It is the Swami's voice ringing through the dark. These tones that are sending your mind away on a wide sweep, toward the rocky Palestine of the Jews, toward the hot sandy deserts north of Mecca, toward sanctuaries buried in the "gloom of great pines," toward the hot, bright banks of sacred Mother Ganges; these low, deep tones assert in the night that "All Truth is One."

There is a hushed stillness and silence on Ashrama's hill, high up among the pines and sycamores. Thinking that no voice but the Swami's is speaking, you look around at the sleeping buildings, which follow the contour of the hills; at the wide, dark, brooding sky; at the black spiked trees and the round hills, lost in the midst of night. Surely his must be the only voice here! But looking around, suddenly, you realize that you are wrong. The night sky, the spiked trees, the sleeping buildings, the curving hills, and all the small things, hidden in the brush or lost in dark little hollows, are saying in tones just as prophetic as the Swami's: "All Truth is One!"

It is Thursday evening and the moonlight Service is almost over. Sitting outside the temple, under a natural pergola of uprights thatched with dried palm leaves that stretches from one building to another, you see that the night is thick and soft; the open space is restless with the slight movements of many people, who are hushed and listening to the Swami, standing beside the temple doors. On one side the hill drops

away into a black hollow filled with the tiled roofs of the Cloister and around it eucalypti and pines stand up, sharp and black, and little lights like fireflies are shining through their branches. These are the far-off little lights of small towns in the valley, and the one engulfing big town, full of the noise, the confusion, the unrest of modern life. But that is all far away from here, from the remote peace of this hill-top where you and the others sit and listen, facing the wide open temple doors.

Temple doors should always be kept open. Down at the end of the long aisle a red lamp burns before the gold and bronze altar, and you feel how comfortingly near that altar is. You feel the altar there, like a hand outstretched—waiting. The eyes of many people around you are lifted to the great doors themselves and there are the words again; written in gold above the doors; written in self-confident, bold and conspicuous letters that stand up before all eyes like a command—a supreme command: “Truth is One.” And remembering the text from which this is taken, you remind yourself that “men call it by various names.”

This brings you back sharply to the periods of time when men did not believe that “Truth is One.” Your mind sweeps backward and, peering at the other faces turned toward the doors, you wonder if they too are not thinking of the martyrdoms, the miseries, the old hates, the needless sacrifices, the families split into factions, the countries devastated, because men believed in jealous gods of their own instead of “Truth is One.” And you remember that barely more than a decade ago the world was split asunder because nations insisted on calling Truth by various names, and even today, even after the fire has died down to ashes, you wonder how many people in the various countries believe, and act on the belief that “all Truth is One?”

Not very many. Not nearly enough, or there would be no small wars, or the necessity for peace conferences or complicated peace machinery which brings no peace. And so you are puzzled, wondering what can be done and how long it will take to leaven the minds of conflicting races in so many different countries, and for a moment as you sit here in the dark you are appalled at the gigantic task that awaits — Truth.

Then you hear the Swami's voice again, mingling with the night and the things belonging to the night. You see the tall figure in his straight orange robe, standing in his simplicity; there is a noble simplicity and there is poetry in the Swami's face and a great yearning in his dark eyes to help this Western world, whose knowledge of these things, compared to his, is like a child's. You see him struggling to simplify his thought and bring it into key with theirs—and yours; you see him putting himself *en rapport* in order to reach them—and you.

You are certain that here is the leaven. It is working in groups—working all over the world in far-flung, earnest little groups of people. His is one of the voices raised in the wilderness and repeating again and again the beautiful, practical idealism of Buddha, of Jesus, of the Rig Veda, of profound thinkers of all times from Akhnaton, the Egyptian, down. . . .

“All Truth is One.”

It rings out through the night. It rings under the stars with tremendous significance, for there is no disguising the ring of Truth. Voices like his have rung out for thousands of days and nights through the long ages of the world. Here and there, men heeded them; now and then in the world's history they have listened to a Gandhi or to a Ramakrishna. The poets, the mystics, the prophets, have always been the seers of the human race. They were the ones to go boldly forward, spying out the land ahead and coming back to tell the people, and the less timid followed.

In the dark, the rustlings of feet, hands and bodies that have reached the end of rigid attention are all about you. The low tones of the organ are mingling with the roll of the cricket in the bush and the cry of a solitary bird in a lonely hollow. Presently these cease and then you hear the Swami's calm and final words:

"May Buddha of the Buddhists, Ahura Mazda of the Zoroastrians, and Divine Mother and Brahman of the Hindus grant unto you—peace!"

These old mystical names that he is invoking have been in the world for many thousands of years, and in the stillness the vibrations of his low voice and the beauty of his prayers are caught up and carried on the winds of the night. Nobody knows how far they are carried. Even the Swami does not know. Farther, much farther probably, than he imagines. Perhaps as far as the rock temples of Mamallipuram and beyond—who knows?

He stands beside the wide open temple doors and the inner altar glitters far on ahead like Hope in the distance. But the faces of the people he looks down upon, have changed. Lines are smoothed out, eyes are quiet now, lips are in repose, bodies are quiescent and at peace. They have discovered that the way of mysticism opens many new doors. For a space of time they were bound neither by necessities, nor family ties, nor bodily ills; spiritually and physically they were on a high hill. And for this space of time—was it an hour? was it as long as life?—for who can measure time?—they were free souls, "unvexed by the loud winds of life."

In order to exclude from the mind questionable things, the mental calling up of those things that are opposite is efficacious for their removal.

—Patanjali.

REFLECTIONS

By Ronald A. L. Mumtaz Armstrong

(From "The Sufi Quarterly")

It is a platitude to observe that we have God behind us and Eternity before. Yet few people think of it, witness their scurrying anxiety, their haste. A good rule in life, to keep us happy, is constantly to dwell upon the thought that each of us is here to play a part: A part well learned and known to our inner Self. We play on the vast stage of the universe; an omnipotent Dramatist provides the means.

"Scriptures," says the Sufi, Inayat Khan, "have called God the Creator: Masons have called Him the Architect; but I know Him as the Actor on this stage of Life." Through us He acts—we need only listen for our Self prompting, when we forget our part. He is there with a word in our ear if something we want is missing; but we must pause to listen.

Life then is easier. No real actor longs for a part unsuited to his genius. Only a mad actor seeks to press his own part upon another. Our concern is with ourselves and to offer, it may be, peace to our neighbors, that they too may hear the Voice within. We shall not want them to hear *our* Voice but *their own*, lest the play be spoiled. We are not here to conquer the world for some Messiah or a new religion. We are here to conquer ourselves: to play our part in a play long since written, on a stage long since set.

Unlimited power is behind the scenes, unlimited "properties." The Author has one desire, and one only, that we play our part. If ever there were a way out of the confusion on the stage today, it is in this—that each begin to play his part. Soon, the example will be infectious, an act more will begin, and each will find happiness in his absorption in the play.

* * * * *

Postscriptum.—A typical modern problem has presented

itself since these reflections were written down. What must a carpenter do, fully competent, fully conscious of his part, but who cannot find work?

There is nothing for it but to wait constantly upon the pleasure of the great Actor Manager, ready at the slightest sign to take up an active part, ceaselessly listening for the Voice, above all confident of His power. Then what is best for the individual, and for the play, will be brought about. It may be that the setting of the vast stage requires, here and there, a group of idle men. You or I may be asked to be one of them. That is no real reason for despair. The rôle of the sons of God on earth is temporary. Some are kings, some beggars, for a while: and then return to the Elysian Fields. Too soon we all forget the poet Milton's line:

They also serve who only stand and wait.

REPORT

COHASSET ASHRAMA ANNIVERSARY

On Saturday afternoon, June 18th, the third anniversary of the establishment of the Cohasset Peace Retreat was observed and in spite of the unfavorable weather more than one hundred persons turned out to bring their warmth of appreciation. Three Swamis came from Providence with a group of their friends; and all gathered together under the pine-covered sanctuary where a simple Service was held at four-thirty in honor of the occasion. Swami Paramananda opened the Service with a Sanskrit invocation filling the atmosphere with the chant of "Shanti"—peace. Then he read lines from Longfellow's immortal poem, "My Cathedral:"

Like tall cathedral towers these stately pines
 Uplift their fretted summits tipped with cones;
 The arch beneath them is not built with stones.
 Not Art but Nature traced these lovely lines

And carved this graceful arabesque of vines;

* * * * *

Enter! the pavement, carpeted with leaves,
Gives back a softened echo to thy tread!
Listen! the choir is singing; all the birds,
In leafy galleries beneath the eaves,
Are singing; listen, ere the sound be fled,
And learn there may be worship without words.

Along with this, he also read his own poem, "My Nature's Sanctuary:"

As I roam in this, My Nature's Sanctuary
Fragrant with perfumed breath,
Shining with living radiance of beauty,
Sacred by its own virtue,
Bestowing beneficence,
Awakening life and ecstasy,
Asking naught, yet giving all to its votaries.
Where would I seek God if I find Him not here?
My body, bend thou now and sing thy song of holy humility.
My heart, rejoice!
Here is enshrined the Maker of all beauty,
My soul, now is the hour of thy fulfillment.

The keynote of the Swami's sermon was "Worship without words." He reminded his congregation that he was going to save all the time for what was to follow later in the day's program as there were many distinguished guests who would take part in the celebration.

Before the dinner gong sounded the guests were seen roaming over the Ashrama rocks, daisy-field and pine-covered nooks. Due to the dampness, the original plan to have the banquet out of doors could not be carried out so the tables were arranged in the large living room of the winter cottage, utilizing every available space to accommodate the guests. Immediately following the dinner, Mr. Hansen, his son Harold, Mr. Adams at the piano, and a clarinetist, gave delightful musical selections, after which the Swami introduced the guest speakers one by one. First Swami Vivideshananda,

the visiting Swami from the Vedanta Society of San Francisco, arose and spoke with feeling and enthusiasm of how this Ashrama reminded him of the Himalyan Peace Retreat where he had spent seven years, and how he wished that people in large numbers would gather here to derive benefit from the spiritual atmosphere of the place. His warm expression was greatly appreciated by the audience as was made evident by their applause. Then Swami Akhilananda spoke touchingly, especially of his visit at the Ashrama during the month of May. Swami Nikhilananda also expressed his appreciation with fervent spirit, speaking of how much benefit he had derived through his two days' stay here and how greatly a retreat like this was needed in America. At the conclusion of his interesting talk, he said: "I can easily visualize how Swami Paramananda gives his inspiring sunset Service on the Rock." Then he recited in Sanskrit a couplet from an ancient scriptural text: "Under the banyan tree sat the youthful teacher surrounded by aged disciples, and through his silent interpretation did he dispel the darkness from the minds of the disciples."

After this there was another musical program given by the distinguished singers, Mr. Alan Hay and Mr. David Leight. They contributed their share to the occasion by the richness of their voices, first with a duet; then Mr. Hay delighted the audience by his solo, and especially when he sang the humorous song, "The Green-Eyed Dragon with the Thirteen Tails."

Through the request of the audience, Gayatri Devi spoke a few words of greeting, and then Swami Paramananda invited anyone from the audience who wished to express anything on this occasion. Mr. Bapat (who has been working at Harvard University for the last two years assisting in work on Pali manuscript) rose to his feet and spoke spontaneously on how much he appreciated the work that Swami Paraman-

anda was doing here in this country. He spoke at length, especially laying emphasis upon the peculiar gift of the Swami's presentation of lofty thoughts in a simple universal way; so much so that sometimes people have said, "This is his own, and not Hindu." Mr. Bapat, in speaking of this, said that that was what he appreciated in the Swami's message, for it had no stint of dogma or religious bias, but it created a real basis for harmony and unity between East and West. He also extended his farewell greeting, as he was leaving soon for India, and he thanked the many friends of the Vedanta Centre through whom he had received so many kindnesses and courtesies. At the conclusion, Swami Paramananda expressed deep gratification that so many had come forward to make the occasion successful. He spoke specially of the peculiar charm and modesty of the place and said, "In some ways this is almost the opposite of the celebrated Ananda-Ashrama in California, and I hope and pray that it will always maintain its naive simplicity and atmosphere of peace." Also he touched upon the thought that although so much appreciation and praise had been showered upon him he wanted the whole audience to realize that it was through the selfless and whole-hearted devotion of the many, many workers that such a place had been created. Swami Paramananda thanked them all, his brother Swamis, the musicians and the other speakers, for making the occasion so full of warmth and interest. Then came the arrangement to send the guests back to the city and it was nearly midnight when the lights of the Ashrama were turned out and all was once more enveloped in deep silence.

Swami Paramananda will be in California throughout the summer and will resume his activities there. In his absence Srimati Gayatri Devi will conduct the regular Sunday and Tuesday Services at the Boston Vedanta Centre. She will also carry on the Saturday afternoons at the Cohasset Peace Retreat.

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"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES." Rig-Veda

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Message of the East



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Secrets of the Meditative Life

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"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."

—*Ezekiel*

"Light shall come again from the East."

—*Tyndall*

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PRAYER FOR A DWELLING

From the Avesta



AY the good and heroic and bountiful souls of the saints come here, and may they go hand in hand with us with the healing virtues of their blessed gifts as wide-spread as the earth, as far-spread as the rivers, as high-reaching as the sun; for the furtherance of better men, for the hindrance of the hostile, and for the abundant growth of riches and glory.

May obedience conquer disobedience within this house; may peace triumph over discord here, and generous giving over avarice, reverence over contempt, truthful speech over lying utterance. May Truth gain the victory over the Demon of the Lie.

In order that our minds may be delighted, and our souls be the best, let our bodies be glorified as well; and O Mazda, may we see Thee, and may we, approaching, come round about Thee, and attain to entire companionship with Thee! And we sacrifice to the Righteous Order, the best, the most beautiful, the bounteous Immortal!

SECRETS OF THE MEDITATIVE LIFE

By Swami Paramananda

(An Address delivered in 1913)

Why do we find it so difficult to contemplate the Divine? It is because the mind wanders. This universe is full of infinite variety and the mind keeps going from one thing to another. For this reason a verse in one of the great Upanishads tells us: "O man, pervade this whole universe with the consciousness of God! He is everywhere. That which you see, whatever you perceive, all that exists, know that to be God's form." Devotees, aspirants, who try to meditate and find their mind scattered by thoughts contrary to their Ideal, are given this great injunction as a mantram to help them toward right contemplation.

As a matter of fact, there are very few who have unbroken meditation—a flow of thought in one direction without interruption—very few indeed, and the remedy is just this that I have told you: Wherever your mind goes, wheresoever it wanders, picture God there. Of course, in the beginning, it requires imagination; but imagination leads finally to Reality. This is one of the greatest secrets of the meditative life. First we imagine, and then gradually, very gradually, the real vision unfolds. Instead of seeing things as they appear, try to see God in them. For instance, when you are striving to fix your mind and something arises to disturb your mental gaze, think that that also is God. Nothing exists without Him; all forms, all objects—everything—can be pervaded with that thought of the Divine. "Knowing this," the Upanishad tells us, "renounce what is unreal."

It becomes easy to renounce the unreal the moment we can picture Reality. Everything has its reality, even the most wicked has something in him which is real, that which causes him to be—his true life. Truth exists, and by meditating on

That, not only is the individual benefitted, but he benefits the world. When your consciousness is filled with suspicion and doubt, naturally you throw that shadow over other lives, even though you may do it unconsciously and unintentionally. In the same way we have the power to help others. We share with our fellows our vision of the world around us. He who sees evil emanates evil, while the one who beholds only God radiates Divinity.

Here those who are skeptical about spiritual things naturally will ask: "How can we see good where we are conscious of nothing but wickedness?" To meet this question, spiritual India has another suggestion to give to those aspirants who are not yet strong enough to stand on their own feet, who have not as yet any real, genuine conviction to sustain them. They are told: First see God—His Light—in the face of those who are full of God-consciousness, who are pure spiritually. Such men represent God; seeing them, no other thoughts will find entrance. That is the idea of association with the holy as a means to meditation. It is, however, a suggestion for beginners; when one becomes far advanced in his spiritual endeavor then all idea of duality drops away from his heart. A truly wise man, one who is illumined, sees no evil. It is not that he sees evil and forgives it, it is that there is nothing anywhere that he shuns. "A knower of Brahman, of Truth, he looks with equal eye upon a dog, a low-born man, an elephant, a cow." He sees that singleness, that Light of God, shining everywhere. For him there is no longer any bondage, any friction in the universe; he has found a state which is harmonious.

Before we reach that state, however, it is needful for us to guard ourselves against certain harmful elements. As Sri Ramakrishna used to say: When a plant is young and tender it is better for a fence to be placed around it so that

it will not be blown away or eaten down by animals. But when it has grown to be a great tree, strong and gigantic, not only does it no longer require protection, but it gives protection to many. The animals can then come and dwell under its branches, shielded from the sun and the rain-storm. So is it with our characters.

We have infinite possibilities within us, but we do not know always how to manifest them. We must learn to draw out our inner forces. The power to do this lies in our discrimination and in our habitual practice. You may remember how in the Bhagavad-Gita, the disciple exclaims in despair: "O Krishna, O Lord! all these beautiful teachings you have given me concerning Self-knowledge and the attainment of divine qualities, I realize that they are true, but I do not see how with this mind I can ever attain such consciousness or make it lasting if I do attain it. For my mind is restless, stubborn and unyielding; I consider it just as difficult to subdue as the wind. When a storm comes, who can control it?" Then the Blessed Lord said: "There is no doubt that the mind is unyielding, strong and stubborn, very difficult to subdue; yet through the practice of discrimination and dispassion it can be subdued."

We hear certain exalted truths and at once we say: "How can we realize them? Man with his mortal mind cannot know such things! It is impossible!" Then comes a voice assuring us: "It is not impossible. Have patience, have courage, have strength, thus you shall succeed." This constant practice is called, in the Sanskrit, *Sadhana*.

It is not easy to conquer the bodily forces to bring them to a state of equilibrium. At the start we are not able to do it; our muscles move, our body gives us pain and makes us conscious only of our physical existence, although our mind and heart are longing to rise above it. Thus we are

naturally led to believe that we are but slaves of nature. People who have no determination give up, saying: "I have looked into this thing; there is nothing in it." There are many who come quickly to this conclusion after nibbling at an idea. Going and tasting here and there is one thing; actually practising an idea faithfully, proving it for yourself, is another. That is what brings courage, conviction, and when once we have gained conviction about something, no one can make us disbelieve in it. Just as you, seeing me sitting here, and I, seeing you sitting there, cannot doubt each other's existence, similarly we have to come face to face with certain facts, and this means breaking down the obstructing walls which we have built up.

The first difficulties that we have to overcome are on the physical plane, but they cannot be lasting. What are we today? Nothing but the result of yesterday, perhaps the day before. Past thoughts and actions have formed us into what we are, with all our tendencies and habits. The thing is how to master these, for we must master them. As we are now, there are some things we like and some things we do not like, according to our natural inclinations. When circumstance causes us to follow a course that is distasteful to us, at first we think that we cannot do it, but after a while we begin to enjoy it, and finally we feel we cannot live without it. Exactly in this way we have created our mental and bodily habits, we have made wrinkles in our mind which we have to smooth by contrary currents and actions.

Swami Vivekananda used to say: "Hundreds of times you may fail, but do not let that distress you. Get up again with fresh vigor." That kind of courage is necessary. This life is full of difficulties, and if we simply come to the conclusion that we are weak and miserable and can do nothing, that is the beginning of our downfall. The one who starts to doubt

himself, who can save him? No one can make us believe in our own strength until we prove it for ourselves, and in order to prove it, we need wonderful devotion to our inner Ideal. What does such devotion mean? It means that day after day, night after night, morning after morning, evening after evening, we strive to make it our own through meditation. Sometimes we find satisfaction, sometimes we do not; yet we do not cease trying. We go on faithfully, without encouraging any doubt, without weakening our faith and fervor. Such one-pointedness in devotion is called *Ekāgra*, and when we are well established in that, nothing can resist it. Hundreds of times the Light may fail to come, but perhaps at the next effort it will come, so why give up and miss the great opportunity?

The biggest drawback in our spiritual practice is skepticism. The seed of doubt once planted in our heart is very difficult to check from growing; therefore we must ever guard ourselves against this tendency. Doubt of Self brings doubt in everywhere. Life becomes very, very bitter or tasteless when you begin to doubt yourself and your strength. When you lose faith in these, you lose faith in even the best that you have been able to attain. Therefore strengthen your true Self.

"Where is the true Self?" you may ask, "and how can we get hold of it?" The more tranquil you become physically, the more quickly you feel the presence of something mightier than what we call the ego, mightier than the little consciousness which plays on the surface of our being. That outer consciousness is only a reflection of the Real, and for this reason it is a great advantage when we can gather up the reflection—that is, all the power which is on the surface—and turn it within, for thus we can get at the Real more quickly. That is why Sri Ramakrishna used to say

that people who were carried away by too much outer activity, too great a desire for name, fame, success, it was very difficult for them to become spiritually engaged. Their mind will not turn toward the inner. Also that was what Christ meant when he said that it was most difficult for the rich to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Why is this? Because the rich are apt to lose their sense of proportion. People who are over-successful in life, who have great wealth, and much to do on the physical plane, are apt to be swept by these things. They lose their equilibrium.

In the life of Sri Ramakrishna, there was a devotee, a very wealthy man, and although he came often to see his Master, his mind was taken up with outward things—hospitals, churches, what we call “good works.” One day Sri Ramakrishna asked him, “Suppose you could have your prayers granted, what would be your prayer to God? Would you pray, ‘Grant me, O God, that I may establish so many schools, hospitals, bathing tanks, this and that,’ or would you ask for vision of Him?” And Sri Ramakrishna said to him: “When a man really wants Truth, he must not let other things come and crowd his mind.”

It is all right, however, to do things in moderation. Lord Krishna teaches that in order to gain mental balance, poise of body and mind, one must train oneself in this direction. Do not think when you are doing too much that you are proving yourself strong. It shows that you are swinging in one direction just like a pendulum and that after a while your mind will swing back in the opposite direction. It is inevitable. Therefore practise moderation in everything. In concentration and meditation never go too far in any direction. This is one of the essential factors in Yoga training. Maintain your equilibrium, you will always accomplish more. If you analyze, you will find that when you do things

moderately, you work more effectively. If you overdo one day, you will suffer from reaction the next day, and not be able to do anything at all. The habit of moderation will bring you to a healthier state of body and mind; you will have a certain sense of lightness, and things will cease to weigh upon you.

These are the teachings given by Lord Krishna to his disciple Arjuna centuries ago. They are not just theories; they have been put into practice by thousands of souls, and unless they were founded on Truth, unless they were practical, they would not be in existence today.

If you say, "This is merely a beautiful study!" that shows you have not penetrated its real meaning. True realization is gained when we apply things practically. So try to regulate your life in such a way that you can practise moderation. And even if you fail, do not let that discourage you, for by keeping steady under failure you will gain a certain quality that will help to bring you to a state of balance. Gradually, as you sit to meditate, you will find that without so much effort, your mind will become quiet, poised, and finally you will not have to make any effort at all. But we cannot achieve this at once. It must come naturally and spontaneously, although it depends upon the earnestness of every individual being. There are some people who can shake things off from their minds more quickly than others. This shows that they are less attached.

Attachment is the source of all misery. It is called the evil in life. Concentration gives one power to free oneself from attachment. Concentration means collecting oneself, making oneself one whole. One's mind no longer goes out to this thing and that; it is no longer divided. We have one fixed Ideal, one fixed purpose. In this way attachment is little by little overcome, and our activities and the results

of our activities gradually become unified, making of us a mighty whole, full of strength, full of poise, full of peace.

To make oneself one whole, one concentrated whole, is the aim and object of Yoga, the basic need of all human beings. Man does not know he can be one; he does not know that by realizing his own singleness, he will realize also his oneness with God. The highest state is to be conscious of One, and the next state is to be conscious of two: "I am the worshipper; Thou art the One to be worshipped—The Ideal!" The difficulty with the ordinary type of mentality is that it is not even conscious of two. Rather it is aware of many things. With the majority of people, the mind is divided into countless fragments; therefore it is weak, it is without the strength to see things clearly.

A divided mind is never a discriminative mind. Until we gain control over our bodily forces, however, until we acquire equilibrium in our physical constitution, the power of discrimination will not be fully unfolded. First, therefore, we must do that which will give us physical poise and a healthy condition of body. This does not mean merely muscular strength. Delicately constituted individuals are often very healthy. Health means attaining a certain purity of body, and that of course depends upon the kind of life we lead. It is very difficult for people to acquire physical purity without the practice of moderation. Our passions, our sensual, selfish desires, anger, restlessness of the body—all these are to be conquered. You ask, "How?" Merely thinking about it will not help you. Do something in moderation with the hope and thought of purifying yourself and very quickly you will catch the thread by which you can be purified. We see by this that moderation is not an ordinary but an essential practice for everyone who wants to live a healthy, happy and normal life. By its means, you naturally

acquire a state of calmness and serenity by which you influence others. The little children who may come in contact with you will be affected. For we do affect the people around us. There are some whose minds are in turmoil and they sap our vitality; again there are others who bring us restfulness, calmness, quiet. They do not rob us nor can we rob them of anything. On the contrary, those who have reached this high serene state of consciousness gain more as they give, because the supply has become so great, so spontaneous, so unbroken that it never is diminished, nay, rather it goes on increasing more and more.

Before we can convey this atmosphere, however, we must practise faithfully certain forms of study and devotion. Not everyone knows how to meditate. Meditation comes naturally. First you read something holy which uplifts your mind to a sphere where you forget little and worldly things, things that are disturbing; then from that reading you take a thought and dwell upon it. If you succeed in dwelling upon it constantly so that the mind becomes concentrated and fixed on that subject, quite spontaneously you reach a state of meditation. That is why different schools of philosophy and religion prescribe the following of certain forms, the repetition of certain holy names, for those who are entering the path of practical spiritual endeavor.

You may wonder what is the real significance of this. When you hear a sound of unusual nature your ear, your mind, are turned toward it; it at once draws your complete attention. So in spiritual life there are certain sound-symbols that are given to devotees in order to turn their attention toward God. Such a symbol is the sacred Word "OM." On hearing it, the aspiring mind becomes concentrated and the whole being runs in that direction. Same way, the idea of the bell is to remind one of the hour of prayer, the hour of

the sacred Word. Often instead of a single word a holy text is given one to repeat. By fixing the mind on that, lesser things fall away from us and realization comes.

It is not by fighting against evil, against our unpleasant habits, that we rise. It is by invoking that which is of opposite nature. As we do this, our turbulent thoughts and weak tendencies drop from us and the mind becomes calm and well-collected.

Mind has been described as a wild elephant rushing from one thing to another. You may bathe it and get it clean, but immediately it rolls in the dust and gets dirty again. Therefore, in order to keep it clean, you must tie it with a chain of holy thoughts. Only then will you be able to meditate upon the Divine and gain supreme peace.

EVENNESS OF ZEAL

From the Teachings of Gautama Buddha

(Translated by F. L. Woodward, M.A.—Cantab.)

(*One Sona Kolivisa, a rich man's son, obtained ordination and full orders from the Master.*)

Now the venerable Sona, not long after being fully ordained, was dwelling in Cool Grove. And he, through excess of zeal in walking up and down (while striving for the Goal), lacerated his feet, and the place where he walked up and down was dabbled with blood like a butcher's shambles. Then to the venerable Sona, as he dwelt apart in solitude, there came a train of thought like this:

"Here am I, one of those disciples of the Exalted One who dwell in earnest zeal; yet is not my heart released without clinging from the *asavas** Now great possessions await me at home. That wealth I may employ and do good deeds with it. How now if I were to return to the (layman's)

*Intoxicants of life.

lower life, employ my wealth, and do good deeds with it?"

Now the Exalted One read with his own mind the thoughts that were in the mind of the venerable Sona, and just as a strong man stretches out his arm and draws back his arm stretched out, even so did He vanish away from the mountain, Vulture's Peak, and appeared in Cool Grove. Then, with a number of brethren, the Exalted One went his rounds from lodging to lodging and came to where the venerable Sona was walking up and down.

Now when the Exalted One saw that place dabbled with blood like a butcher's shambles, He said to the brethren: "Whose is this walk, brethren, all dabbled with blood like a butcher's shambles?"

And they said to him: "Lord, the venerable Sona, through excess of zeal in walking up and down, has lacerated his feet, so that his walking place is in this state."

Then the Exalted One went to the lodging of the venerable Sona and sat down on a seat that was ready for Him. And the venerable Sona saluted the Exalted One and sat down at one side. As he thus sat, the Exalted One said to the venerable Sona: "Is it not true, Sona, that this train of thought occurred to you as you dwelt apart in solitude: 'Here am I, one of those disciples of the Exalted One who dwell in earnest zeal. Yet is not my heart released from the *asavas* without clinging to them. Now great possessions await me at home. That wealth I may employ and do good with it. How now if I were to return to the (layman's) lower life, employ my wealth, and do good deed's with it?'"

"It is so, Lord."

"Now how say you, Sona? Formerly when you dwelt at home, were you not skilled in playing stringed music on the lute?"

"Yes, Lord."

"Now how say you, Sona? When your lute strings were over-taut, did your lute then give out a sound, was it fit to play upon?"

"No, Lord."

"Now how say you, Sona? When your lute strings were neither over-taut nor over-slack, but evenly strung, did your lute then give out a sound; was it fit to play upon?"

"It was, Lord."

"Even so, Sona, excess of zeal makes one liable to sluggishness. Wherefore do you, Sona, persist in evenness of zeal, master your faculties, and make that your mark."

"Even so, Lord," said the venerable Sona, and attended to what was said to him by the Exalted One.

And the Exalted One, having thus exhorted the Venerable Sona with these words, as a strong man stretches out his arm or draws back again his arm outstretched, even so did He vanish from the sight of the venerable Sona in Cool Grove, and appeared again on the mountain, Vulture's Peak.

Thereupon the venerable Sona persisted in evenness of zeal, mastered his faculties, and made that his mark. And the venerable Sona, living alone, remote, earnest, ardent, and resolute, in no long time came to realize for himself in that very life, by his own powers of mind, that Goal unsurpassed of holy living, to win which the clansmen duly wander forth from home to the homeless life, so that he knew for sure: "Destroyed is rebirth (for me), lived is the holy life, done is my task: there is no more life for me on terms like these."

Thus did the venerable Sona become yet another of the Arahants.

This trembling, wavering mind, so hard to guard and guide,
the wise man maketh straight as a fletcher doth his arrow.

—*Dhammapada*.

SYNTHESIS

By Nicholas Roerich

Only the most all-comprising and most well-understood synthesis can create the benevolent co-operation of which humanity is at present so greatly in need. From the highest representatives of our spiritual world to the most materialistic shopkeeper, everyone agrees that without a synthetic co-operation no activity can be created. We see in the Culture of whole countries, that wherever a wide synthesis is understood and submitted, the creativeness of the country bears fruit and advances beautifully. No separation, no chauvinism, can create such progress as is reached by the radiant smile of synthesis.

Let us not regard this statement as a useless truism. At this time, many conceptions have been completely perverted through misunderstanding or through a personal desire to give the concept some casual meaning. Beginning with the very highest conceptions even, one may say, of God and down to the smallest personal feelings, how often these are mutilated and misconstrued.

What should humanity do in such cases of evident distortion of its fundamental ideals? Should it not purge them immediately and restore them to their simple, original meanings? One may certainly create entirely new conceptions and expressions, but it is absolutely inadmissible to attach to old conceptions, established centuries ago, new meanings inspired by egoism. If the latter be permitted, our lives, instead of becoming finer and more fittingly crystallized, will turn into unbearable chaos and into a confusion of tongues, of which the Bible speaks so symbolically in the tower of Babel. Of course, everything progresses; life requires new definitions for its discoveries and for the circumstances caused by them. We have new names for rays, gases, various

energies, planets, and for everything that was unknown yesterday. Perhaps some entirely new language will be created. This may be so, and in containment we will understand and accept it, but it would be a great mistake, leading to regrettable and extended consequences, to offer our new, arbitrary and often presumptuous meanings to immemorably old conceptions, created and ordained to us by past Cultures. This would be a peculiar movement towards disunity and decomposition, whereas it is the duty of every thinking being to serve the creation of synthesis, co-operation and construction of the Good.

A study of all the misused and perverted expressions would no doubt form a considerable scientific work. Let us hope that someone will find it possible to work on this problem, which is of such importance for humanity. Just now I would like to clarify the definition of two conceptions with which one meets daily. We often speak of these significant ideas: Culture and civilization. To our surprise we find that even these thoughts which seem to have such definite roots have also already been subject to misrepresentation and perversion. For example, up to now many people consider it fit to replace the word "Culture" by "civilization," forgetting completely that the very Latin root "cult" has a very deep spiritual significance, whereas "civilization" has as its root a civic social structure of life.

It seems quite clear that every country passes through certain social steps, viz. civilization, which in its highest synthesis forms the eternal and indestructible conception of Culture. As we see from many examples, civilization may perish, may be altogether annihilated, but Culture creates its great heritage upon indestructible spiritual tablets, which sustain the future generations. Every maker of standardized articles, every manufacturer, is of course already a civilized

person; but no one would insist that the owner of every factory is necessarily a cultured person. And it may easily happen that one of the subordinate workmen in the factory may be the transmitter of indubitable Culture, whereas the owner himself has still remained only within the bounds of civilization. One may easily imagine a "Home of Culture," but a "Home of Civilization" would sound absurd. The conception "cultural worker" is quite definite, but "civilized worker" means something entirely different. Every University Professor will be well satisfied to be called a cultural worker, but try to call the honorable Professor a civilized worker! Every scholar, every creator would feel an inner uneasiness at this title, if not even offense. We know the expressions "civilization of Greece," "civilization of Egypt," "civilization of France," but they do not in the least exclude the concept, far greater in its unalterability, of the Great Culture of Egypt, Greece, Rome, France. . . .

In a previous article on Culture, I defined Culture as the Cult of Light. After all, we need not resign this definition. *Cult* will always remain the adoration of the principle of Good, and the word *Ur* reminds us of the old Eastern root, which always means Light, Fire. But perhaps I am too enthusiastic about the conception of Culture, therefore let us turn to most prosaic definitions of dictionaries and encyclopedias. Webster defines civilization as "a civic act or a civilized condition" and as "a relative advancement in social culture." The same dictionary defines Culture as "an act of improving and developing by education, discipline, etc., the enlightenment and discipline acquired by mental and moral training; refinement; the characteristic attainments of people or social order, as 'Greek Culture.' "

Hastings' Encyclopedia of Ethics omits the word "civilization" altogether, as not entering the sphere of higher ethical

conceptions, and devotes the following lines to Culture: "To Bacon the world is indebted for the term, as well as for the philosophy of culture (Advancement of Learning, 1605, II XIV, 2). While of itself the notion of culture may be broad enough to express all forms of spiritual life in man—intellectual, religious and ethical, it is best understood intensively as humanity's effort to assert its inner and independent being. This effort is observed in a series of contrasts, due to the division of man's functions into intellectual and activistic. The most general contrast is that between nature and spirit, with its dualism of animality and humanity. With the ideal of culture, man is led to live a life of contemplation rather than one of conquest, while his attention is directed towards the remote rather than towards the immediate. Viewed socially, culture is contrasted with industrial occupation, the two differing in their valuation of work."

Thus we see that speaking of Culture as of the adoration of Light, we have but synthesized the existing definition.

If someone will insist, ignorantly, that the conception of Culture is connected only with Physical Culture, he will simply show his limitedness. If anyone will recollect some previous unfortunate misuse of this high conception, he will simply cut off all possibilities of development, refinement of consciousness and containment for himself.

We have met with a very definite understanding of these two conceptions among people. The masses consider everyone who wears a white collar a civilized man, often even mispronouncing this word, which they have heard somewhere. Every literate person is already civilized. Thus, although in primitive form, the first principles of a civil state are correctly understood. But above this civil state, so easily reached, all people of the world feel the existence of something higher, to which every searching human spirit

invariably strives. For this higher conception even the most primitive peoples have their own word, which will tell you of mutual understanding, of higher spirituality, of higher knowledge and of joy of the spirit. Those will not be merely clerical conceptions, but they will correspond exactly to our conception, inherited by us from great discoveries of the Latin Culture. Perhaps we might take the same conception from Chinese or Tibetan writings, but the West has been enlightened by Latin sources of this great conception; therefore we cannot distort it, just to placate those who would like wilfully to exploit or pervert it.

For some reasons everyone easily understands the definition of a "World-day of Culture," but a World-day of civilization may be interpreted in a rather strange way, and perhaps even comically. The example of the relationship of these two accepted conceptions, Culture and civilization, reminds us how many of correlations have been forgotten and misused. We know how many ancient commandments require a new translation, since many definitions of our nearest past turn out to be either non-defining or primitive, and let us not forget that the end of the nineteenth century did not contribute much toward the refinement of scientific and philosophic terms. But now we are at the gates of a most significant time, at a time of conscious synthesis, when no perverted temporary conglomerations should obstruct our striving toward Light and toward unconstrained knowledge.

Some feel that the pronouncement of the word "Culture" implies conceit and vanity. But this is not so; on the contrary, all striving toward perfection is already the opposite to ignorant conceit. He who is conceited, being self-content, does not move, but the searching one strives and is ready to defend Culture against all attacks of ignorance, if only to move untiringly along the Path of Light. This Light is not

an abstract conception. The discoveries of our best scientists now tell us of immediate possibilities, which only a quarter of a century ago appeared as an unattainable Utopia, and evoked, even in scientific Institutions of that time, smiles of pity. There are unfortunately too many examples of this. But we are happy to see how the evolution of humanity, even through peculiar paths, rapidly changes the meaning of the whole contemporary civilization. This will be followed by a growth of the accumulations of Culture. And if people will begin to think of Culture, will begin to introduce actively into daily life the sacred conception of Culture, this certainly should not be considered as conceit, but as a proof of their readiness for higher containment.

This benevolent synthesis will help to bring into life sane, high conceptions, and will teach us to absorb and apply all which yesterday seemed to be an abstract absurdity, or inapplicable awkwardness, or simply ridiculous, from the point of view of conventional habits, prejudice and superstition. Have not prejudice and superstition spoiled many beautiful conceptions? And the young generation now has valiantly to uplift the forgotten treasures, in the name of a better and more radiant life!

Himalayas

December 24, 1931

FLOWER IN THE CRANNIED WALL

By Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies;—
Hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower—but if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I would know what God and man is.

STARS AND THE SOUL

By Michael Pupin

(Extracts from an Address delivered at St. Thomas's Church, New York City.)

To the astronomer, the place of our little earth in the stellar universe is like that of a tiny fragment of a grain of sand in the wastes of Sahara. Organic life, including the life of man, is to him a mere momentary incident in the transient existence of this tiny terrestrial structure, and he asks: How can a tiny phenomenon like this have any significant meaning in cosmic evolution?

The fact that more than a million of millions of our terrestrial globes can be packed into a single star like the Betelgeuse does not necessarily mean that this giant star, on account of its dimensions, represents an act of creation which is far more wonderful and significant than anything on our little earth. Compare the vast structure of Betelgeuse with the tiny globule of a living cell which in the course of a few months only will develop into a human being. The star is only a cosmic cloud of a hot and tenuous gas; it is a mere vacuum.

The living cell, on the other hand, although barely visible to the naked eye, is a structure of marvelous complexity. It stores the ancestral physical and mental heritage of a human being. This heritage is the power which will control the life of this being from cradle to grave. It is a practically infinite number of these microscopic units of vast complexity which, united by bonds of co-ordinated functions, form the human body, the home of the soul of man.

Consider now the intellectual, esthetic, and spiritual faculties of the human soul; compare them with what is going on in the substance of Betelgeuse or of any other blazing star in the heavens, and the star will appear much

less awe-inspiring. They are, we know, a chaos of atomic motions the energy of which is the stellar heat energy. From this chaos, we hope, will some day arise a cosmos, a creation of simple law and beautiful order, just as it has arisen from the energy chaos of our central star, the sun. This cosmos is the terrestrial cosmos of organic life in which the soul of man appears as the crown of creation. It declares the glory of God more eloquently than all the stars in the heavens.

If this terrestrial cosmos, this creation of simple law and beautiful order, is the result of accidents in our solar system, as some astronomers suggest, then let us pray to Divine Providence that such accidents occur a countless number of times in the galaxies of the heavenly stars.

COMPANY OF THE HOLY

From "Spiritual Teachings of Swami Brahmananda"

(Given to his young disciples)

THE SWAMI.—Read or hear however much you may, nothing will leave a more profound impression on your mind and benefit you so largely and practically as the company of holy men. You learn just from watching their daily life. As an illustration, I would like to relate an incident from the life of a devotee. Adhar Sen went to Sri Ramakrishna accompanied by a friend of his, an Inspector of Schools. This friend would at times experience a kind of inspiration and lose all outward consciousness. People called it *Bhava*.

One day it so happened that just after their arrival, the Master fell into deep Samadhi (spiritual ecstasy). From his face beamed a lustre divine indicating the unbounded joy that the Master felt. At sight of this, Adhar Babu said to his companion: "Look here, my friend! I see your *Bhava* is not real *Bhava*. Whenever you enter it, you seem to feel

a great torment within. From Divine communion no torment or torture can result. By what I see now in the Master, this flood of Divine joy, my eyes are opened."

DISCIPLE.—Maharaj, many maintain that merely paying visits to holy men is enough—hearing them or observing their life is not necessary. Are we to believe this?

THE SWAMI.—No! Never! You must mix with them, with an open heart. If any doubt arises in your mind, you must tell it to them frankly and get it solved by their help, if you are not able to do it yourself. You must also observe their life in detail and model yours by what you see in them.

DISCIPLE.—Maharaj, you said that momentary enthusiasm brings no good, that spiritual realization is a question of time—am I then to give up my yearning for God-realization?

THE SWAMI.—I might have said that in connection with something else. By momentary enthusiasm is meant, to become restless and cry and jump for a day or two from a fit of emotion: an external manifestation of a sudden internal feeling. This disappears in no time; then out of despair and dejection, man gives up the path altogether.

DISCIPLE.—As Sri Ramakrishna has said, if the place for digging a well is shifted again and again, you will never get water. Is that what you mean?

THE SWAMI.—Yes, tenacity is what is required. If a man's restlessness results from sincere love of God, he cannot live a God-less life, even though he fails to realize Him. Millions of births may pass without attaining Him, yet he will persist on calling upon Him steadily and quite unmoved.

Meditation is not an easy thing. Eat a bit more and your mind will not settle that day. When lust, anger, greed and the whole host of evil passions are kept under control, then and then alone does meditation become possible. If any one

of these asserts itself, meditation will be impossible. It is easier to sit in a circle of burning fire. But to keep the passions under control and not allow them to make an impression upon the mind—that is real *Tapasya* (austerity).

Without meditation the mind cannot be tranquil, and without tranquillity religion is not possible. To think, "I shall meditate when the mind grows tranquil" is to think an impossibility. Tranquillity and meditation go hand in hand. Strive hard; it is indeed a difficult task. Faith, unshakable faith is necessary. Without that you cannot succeed. Faith, you know, is the only resource; strengthen it by all possible means.

DISCIPLE.—If doubt creeps in at times what shall I do?

THE SWAMI.—You cannot have unshakable faith till God-realization comes. It is possible only when you have the vision of God, when you have realized Him. Till then you can only make an approach to true faith; nothing more. Whenever doubts disturb the even balance of the mind, hold fast to God and pray. If you can do so over and over again, your conviction will be firm and invincible. Doubts surely will come, but drive them out in this wise. Think within yourself: "God is, but because of my lot I cannot see Him. The moment His grace descends, that moment I shall be blessed by seeing Him." Do not lose faith. Cling to Him always and under all circumstances.

Our life, like a river, strikes its banks, not to find itself closed in by them, but to realize anew every moment that it has its unending opening toward the sea. It is as a poem that strikes its metre at every step, not to be silenced by its rigid regulations, but to give expression every moment to the inner freedom its harmony.

—*Rabindranath Tagore.*

IN MEMORIAM

Once again the shadow of great loss has fallen over the Ramakrishna Mission. Two, whose lives were given wholly to the furtherance of its ideals, in June of this year slipped from the ranks of its bodily workers,—Sjt. Mahendranath Gupta or Master Mahasaya, known around the world as “M”, beloved householder disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and recorder of his immortal Gospel; and Rao Sahib C. Ramaswami Aiyangar, more familiarly called “Ramu”, disciple of Swami Ramakrishnananda, and tireless worker at the Madras *Math* where, for over a quarter of a century, he gave himself tirelessly to the direction of the Ramakrishna Mission Students’ Home which he had founded.

To Master Mahasaya both East and West owe an incalculable debt, for it was through his hand that the living atmosphere and immortal teaching of the Master was conveyed to the world at large. How “The Gospel” was written by “M” is in itself a clear indication of the mighty Power under whose guidance he lived and moved. In 1882 he met Sri Ramakrishna and for four years sat at his feet, drinking in every precious word that was uttered. In order to fix these conversations in his mind, it was his habit to note them down in a little book, so that by reading them he could reawaken the bliss he always felt in the Master’s presence, and also because Sri Ramakrishna had once said to him: “Whatever you hear falling from this mouth, know it is the Mother that is speaking.” With divine prescience, Sri Ramakrishna himself aided his disciple in this effort. Often he would send for him when the flow of inspiration was unusually intense, and would direct his attention to the great truths as he uttered them. Moreover when “M” expressed his desire to renounce everything for the life of holiness, he forbade him, saying: “The speaker or preacher of the Word, the Lord keeps in the world in bondage.”

He was older than many of the young men who first made direct contact with Sri Ramakrishna. In fact, as head-master of a school, he was instrumental in bringing his most spiritually-minded students to Dakshineswar, some of them becoming among the closest of Sri Ramakrishna's disciples. After Sri Ramakrishna's passing, it was his support of the small group of Sannyasin disciples (along with that of a few others)—his veneration for them—that sustained them in those first days of stupendous loss and encouraged them to tread the path on which their feet had been set.

It was Master Mahasaya's destiny to live for many years after his Master's going, but they were years which he filled with the radiance of holiness. His life was of the simplest and his greatest joy was to gather around him those whose yearning was awakened and fill them with the beauty and blessedness which was his.

On June 2nd, at the mellow age of seventy-eight, he finally closed his eyes upon the things of this earth, holding to the sacred memories which had been the support of his life and which gently carried him over the borderland into the bliss of oneness with his Ideal.

Of "Ramu" it can be said that he was the pure type of the *Karma Yogin*—a tireless server in the Ramakrishna Mission work, whose ceaseless, concentrated efforts gave practical expression to the devotion burning within him. Meeting with Swami Ramakrishnananda shortly after the Swami had been sent by Swami Vivekananda to start a branch of the Mission in Madras, he forthwith became his ardent disciple and inspired by his great spirit, turned his naturally compassionate nature toward the aiding of the poor and helpless.

The crowning glory of these efforts was the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, the idea for which was inspired by

a word from the Swami, who, touched to the quick by the dire need of the destitute students of Madras, expressed to "Ramu" a wish that the *Math* (Mission branch) had the means to give food and shelter to some of these. The suggestion was enough. With an intensity of purpose which through twenty-six years never wavered, he went to work. The result has been an Institution which, housed today in palatial buildings, accomodates 140 boys, most of them free boarders, with Residential School, Industrial School and Workshop attached, and which boasts a permanent fund of about four lakhs of Rupees.

In recognition of this great service, the Government conferred on him the honored title of Rao Sahib and the Kaiser-i-Hind Silver Medal. Not for rewards did this disciple work, however. He "served for the joy of serving" in the great spirit of the Gita, and in that spirit on June 17th, at the age of fifty-nine, laid aside his work and entered into the Peace of God.

THE DEATHLESS SELF

By Jabez T. Sunderland

Emerson on the seventy-seventh anniversary of his birth, received a letter from Professor Max Muller of Oxford, the English translator of many of the Sacred Books of the East, bringing birthday greetings and containing a striking passage from an ancient Upanishad of India, recently discovered.

"Old age and decay laid hold of the body, the senses, the memory, the mind, but never of the Self, the Looker-on. The Self never grows tired: only the body grows tired of supporting the Self. The Self never grows blind: only the windows of the senses become darkened with dust and rain. The Self never forgets: only the inscriptions on the memory fade, and it is well that much should be forgotten."

*"Unity."

A SONG

By Richard Crashaw

(An English poet of the 17th century, belonging to the anti-Puritan school.)

Lord, when the senses of Thy sweet grace
Sends up my soul to seek Thy face,
Thy blessed eyes breed such desire,
I dy in love's delicious Fire.

O Love, I am Thy Sacrifice.
Be still triumphant, blessed eyes.
Still shine on me, fair suns! that I
Still may behold, though still I dy.

Though still I dy, I live again;
Still longing so to be still slain,
So gainfull is such loss of breath.
I dy even in desire of death.

Still live in me this loving strife
Of living death and dying life.
For while Thou sweetly slayest me
Dead to my selfe, I live in Thee.

A SACRED ANNIVERSARY

In Boston, during the summer months, it is Swami Paramananda's habit to gather students and friends around him at the Cohasset Ashrama every Saturday afternoon, and talk to them simply and spontaneously, either seated upon the Great Rock or in the "Nature Sanctuary" where, under the pines, he can give utterance to the brooding spirit of peace and holiness which forms the native atmosphere of this lovely woodland Retreat.

And while the memory of all these gatherings will remain fresh and fragrant in every heart, one special occasion stands

out with peculiar vividness. That was on July 4th of this year when the Swami observed the anniversary of the passing of his great Master, the Swami Vivekananda. On that day, all who felt so inclined were invited by the Swami to go with him to the little Ashrama and join in a period of silence—not silence merely of the tongue, but that inner silence, immersed in which the soul can pay its most profound homage to Divinity.

The response to the Swami's invitation was eager and spontaneous. At the opening Service in the Sanctuary at eleven o'clock, many assembled, and though a little rain began to fall, it seemed to those present only like an added benediction, under whose gentle influence even the murmur of the leaves was hushed and the birds muted their songs.

The Swami spoke briefly. He said:

"In India on such occasions as this, showers are considered very auspicious, so let us all enjoy this light rainfall and accept it as our blessing and baptism.

"Though words sound harsh when preparing for silence, yet I must tell you something of the order of the day. I am asking you to refrain from talking from twelve to three o'clock. You can read, meditate, and think beautiful thoughts. Even though the atmosphere is not clear, you will find places which will furnish protection and shelter. After this shower I have a feeling Nature will again bless us and give us freedom to roam through the woodland.

"Cast out all fear, all timidity and all ordinary thoughts as we come together for this memorial Service. Here in this Nature Sanctuary, marked with special significance, this altar has been built with inspiration and devotion, entirely without calculation or plan. It represents not only the spirit of the forest, but a very beautiful memory. I have placed upon it a portrait of Swami Vivekananda, not only because I have great

reverence and devotion for him, but because this is the anniversary of the day on which he attained immortality. We do not call it death. It is *Mukti*, liberation. Especially those souls who go freely bring a very great blessing to mortals who are striving for perfection. Hold such thoughts constantly in your mind during your silence.

“Om! O Thou supremely blissful Lord,

“Through whose grace even a dumb man
becomes eloquent

“And the lame can cross the mountains—

“We come to Thee for guidance,

“We take shelter at Thy feet!

Swami Vivekananda, whose destiny it was to play a great part in the modern religious movements of this country, came unknown and without credentials to the great Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in the year 1892. When introduced to that august assembly of men and women, he had no utterance, he felt he could not rise and speak, but when called upon, he chanted this great prayer. And what a wonderful fire of Truth came!

“Om! O Thou supremely blissful Lord . . .

“Om!—the Word which was in the beginning, the Word which is God. When we understand Its significance, life takes on an altogether different meaning. We feel the closeness of that One of whom it has been said: He is nearer to us than breathing, closer than hands or feet. There are no words by which I can make you understand. Open your hearts the same way the great mystics open theirs.

“Thou, through whose grace the lame can cross the mountains!—mountains of difficulty, mountains of tribulation!—through whose grace we can surmount the insurmountable.—What a magnificent prayer!

“I feel such kinship with those of you who want to cele-

brate your Fourth of July in this very special way. Fourth of July stands for liberty, freedom, and as I have told you, it is the day on which Swami Vivekananda found his liberation. I was with one of the older Swamis on that day, thirty-one years ago. He told me: I had a dream—I was with Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) and he said to me that he was about to cast off his body as a person spits out something from his mouth. 'I do not see how I can live in this body any longer,' he exclaimed. 'It is not death but Samadhi'!

"It is not just one special mortal who is destined for great thoughts and spiritual vision. Let us believe in our own innate power to unfold in the same way. Let us unfurl the sail of our soul so we may catch the grace of the Divine Being. Through His grace, open every avenue, that you may be filled with Divine strength. Cast out all fear. Give yourself this day. Let no distracting thoughts keep you from your holy purpose. Gather your entire being together. Let this Divine breeze blow away all weariness, all sadness, all fear and all weakness, that you may feel strongly a consciousness of the Divine Spirit, omnipotent, all-pervading!

"This is the Cathedral of the Pines, not made by man's hand. 'Where would I find God if I find Him not here?' He is the all-pervading One,—Father, Mother, Guide, Companion and Friend. Let us forget creed, dogma and all preconceived notions. Let us find that Great Presence which Christ found when He went aloof in the wilderness. Do not all great religions tell us we have One God, One Spirit? Let us realize that fact today in our innermost depths that we may be renewed in body, mind and spirit."

The Swami then read Swami Vivekananda's "Song of the Sannyasin," remarking at the close:

"Christ also said: Who is my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters? Only that One who is in heaven."

At three o'clock the Swami declared the silence ended.

"Silence bears fruit," he said. "Sometimes it is charged in a way that nothing else is. There is one thought I must share with you as my fruit of silence—two lines written by Swami Vivekananda, 'He who loves and serves humanity, he truly worships God.' When I was preparing my part of your simple feast, I realized in full measure to what extent these words are true. Meditation, prayer and performance of ritual are all valuable, also study, but greater than these is loving service to humanity. The crown of God is man himself. So when we serve humanity, we are best serving God. I want you always to remember this. God is no respecter of persons or creeds. The heart without envy, jealousy or hatred, no matter where it is evolved, is a fitting altar for Divinity. Remember there is no wind that can blow away the spirit of man."

REPORT

Save for the observance of the anniversary of Swami Vivekananda's passing, there was no event of special significance during the summer season at the Vedanta Centre of Boston.

On July 6th Swami Paramananda returned to his California Ashrama. Soon after his arrival, he was invited by Dr. Sheldon Shepherd, prominent Universalist minister, to be one of the principal speakers at an Olympic Conference to be held at his church at the close of the Olympiad. Owing to circumstances, the Swami was not able to accept that honor, but finally agreed to lead a Meditation Service at the end of one of the evening meetings, at which Judge Lindsey and other speakers had been heard at length. In spite of the lateness of the hour, the three hundred or more in the congregation waited for the Swami's word and afterwards showed great warmth of appreciation.

The Swami thought it best to suspend the Hollywood and Altadena Classes during the time of summer heat, otherwise Ashrama activities have flowed on unchanged.

On the 14th of September, Srimati Gayatri Devi left Boston for the Ananda-Ashrama, California. Her departure was the occasion for a farewell reception at the Boston Centre, following the Tuesday Class, at which her many friends paid tribute to her lofty spirit, and expressed their gratitude for her presence among them, which had brought them not only high inspiration, but a new sense of the unity of East and West. Srimati also gave voice to her deep feelings for the Boston work and its members.

Sister Daya will now take charge of all Services and Classes in Boston, during the Swami's absence.

The early morning hours of late have seen the Swami out gardening, caring for a host of baby trees—nearly a hundred and fifty of them—which have been planted by his hand or under his direction during the past few months. At sunrise he is up and out with hose, rake and hoe, giving a pat here and a prop there, while the drops of life-giving water shower down on the tender green of the new leaves. The growth of the little nurslings has been amazing, even of those which everyone prophesied would surely not survive and soon they will add their shade and beauty to the ever-increasing loveliness of the Ashrama.

Ashrama Guest-house has been in full swing, under the gracious guidance of the hostess, Mrs. Ida McCarthy. Among others who received its welcome were Dr. Cowling, President of Carleton College, Minn., and Dr. John R. Haynes, aged physician and political worker, both of whom expressed deep appreciation for the Swami and his work. In fact, Dr. Cowling expressed the wish that someday the Swami might visit the College and speak to his boys.

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"TRUTH IS ONE, MEN CALL IT BY VARIOUS NAMES." Rig-Veda

VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East



NOVEMBER, 1932

Realization and Self-Surrender

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Message of the East

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."

—*Ezekiel*

"Light shall come again from the East."

—*Tyndall*

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NOVEMBER, 1932

No. 9

MOUNTAIN SONGS

Of the Navajo Indians

I.

In a holy place with a God I walk,
In a holy place with a God I walk,
On Pelado Peak with a God I walk,
In old age wandering with a God I walk,
In old age wandering with a God I walk,
On a trail of beauty with a God I walk.

II.

Homeward behold me faring,
Homeward upon the rainbow;
Homeward behold me faring.
Lo, yonder, the Holy Place!
 Yea, homeward behold me faring.
To Life Unending, and beyond it,
To Joy Unchanging, and beyond it,
 Yea, homeward behold me faring.

REALIZATION & SELF-SURRENDER

By Swami Paramananda

“Set yourself sincerely for self-realization; kill your ego; realize the Self; then the whole world will be astounded to see you and will give you the seat of an *Acharya* (Teacher).”

Certain utterances, when we first read them, may seem to us rather eccentric, yet when we strive patiently to understand their significance, when we learn to apply them, we find that they liberate the mind and spirit. For example, these words from a great Hindu teacher, which I have just quoted: “Set yourself sincerely for self-realization; kill your ego; realize the Self . . .” will seem to the average man like a contradiction. How can we realize the self by killing the self, and what would happen if we could get rid of our ego or what we call our identity? The last part of the quotation tells us: “Then the whole world will be astounded to see you and will give you the seat of an *Acharya*.”

Those who desire honor or glory, there is nothing they will not do to acquire it. They will go through any ordeal, risk their very lives to attain their end. It is not through ambition, however, that they will find their fulfillment, nor through egotistic endeavor, but rather through the abandonment of the self. Strange though it may seem, it is to people who do not want anything that everything comes. Look at the lives of truly great men—the saints and sages—they ask nothing, yet all things come to them, are poured in upon them. The selfish man says: “Very well then, I shall pretend I want nothing.” It is not a question of pretending. When the lotus flower blossoms, it does not have to pretend, it is actually a centre of attraction. It draws the bees. In the same way, the souls of men are drawn when they find their divine Centre. And it is not difficult to find it if we do not take a roundabout way. For instance, simple faith gives us

our contact with Divinity. But though it is very easy to accept the fundamental thought that we are descendants of the Most High, it is not so easy to reveal it in our actions. Theory is not enough; we must prove our faith. There is a great difference between a man who knows he is the son of a king and one who is merely playing a make-believe game. He who is royal, even though he is dressed in rags, does not act like a beggar. The realization of what he is will give him dignity; he will reveal it in his bearing and in his stature. The same is true in regard to spiritual realization. Once we have grasped the fundamental Fact of existence, not theoretically but consciously, it changes our whole mental attitude. No longer can we act with petty instinct; nothing any more can frighten us, nothing can thwart us, because we know that we have a divine heritage,—a Father who shields and protects us, a Mother who tenderly cares for us, and a Friend who gives us companionship. In fact, when that supreme realization actually dawns in the heart, the whole of life becomes saturated with it.

You may ask, "How is one to attain this consciousness?" One of the best means is to remind ourselves constantly of our true being. The most practical way of helping anyone is to re-connect his mind with the higher aspects of his life and experience. Often, in a moment of anger or of anguish and doubt, a man may lose his sense of values; he may even come to the verge of suicide, yet, at that time, if we can remind him of his better moments, his happier moments, perhaps of an event in his childhood, or something vital and constructive he has done, quite naturally the implement with which he intended to destroy himself will drop away from his hand. I am giving an extreme illustration, but the same thing is true for every one of us. We have thoughts of self-depreciation or bitterness toward others because of the fail-

ures we have made, because of the impediments in our path, because of the shortcomings which we cannot help, but these all vanish from our mind and heart as soon as someone reminds us of our divine birthright.

The only way of salvation, of liberation and freedom, is to establish our contact with our higher resources. The world reminds us through our mistakes, through our unfortunate experiences, how bound we are, how full of failings, but God reminds us always that there is no defeat, that there can be no defeat, because we are His children. Even in human relationships, a noble man, a truly great man, never makes you feel your littleness; on the contrary, he makes you aware of your innate nobility. He infuses within you new hope, new courage, new feeling and faith in your own power to be and to do. Multiply many, many times the help that man can give you, and you will begin to understand the stature of God. He is constantly striving to give our faith back to us. In countless ways, He tries to lift our gaze to higher things, that we may no longer look down upon ourselves and life. He gives us the lovely dawn, that we may forget the sadness and doubt of night; He gives us the beautiful daylight, the sunshine, the color, that we may wipe from our minds those horrible experiences which tend to destroy in us all that is fine and delicate. In one form or another, He gives us visions, realizations by means of which we are able to reach up to Him and know that we are part of one vast Creation.

“The Dharma of the Tathagata requires every man to free himself from the illusion of self, to cleanse his heart, to give up his thirst for pleasure and lead a life of righteousness.” These exalted ideas we can have before us in written form, we can memorize the words, but until they enter into our life and our living they are of little avail. It is not that the

Lord Buddha, not that any of these wise men, asks us to be deprived of existence, of consciousness, or of the means for doing good; only they wish to protect us so that we may not suffer through self-inflicted wounds. For we do wound ourselves constantly. Every time we hate, every time we indulge in Self-doubt or doubt of our fellow-man, we inflict a wound upon our own soul, and when this happens too frequently, our higher senses become paralysed.

How often we hear people say, "My brain is confused! I do not believe in God or in Truth; I cannot trust anyone!" This is a most deplorable disease of the mind and the only way we can cure it is by re-establishing our faith in Divinity. Do not think, however, that faith in Divinity can be established without at the same time establishing a living relationship with the Divine. If we believe in God, at once we grow conscious of our connection with Him—that we are His children. And how should children of God behave? They should seek to become god-like. If you are the son of a noble father, naturally you want to be like that father. We all have a certain element of hero-worship in us. When we see someone of model character, we imitate him, we speak like him, we act like him. It is easy to imitate outer things, but outer things are nothing if we do not gain the inner likeness. No one can imitate Christ successfully unless he acquires Christ-like qualities, such as love and non-resistance. No one can practise love and non-resistance unless his heart is cleansed of all enmity; but once his heart is cleansed of enmity and all that is alien, he becomes so God-abiding that by touching him we also touch God.

I am not just talking nonsense or giving voice to some ancient superstition. How can we know the merit of love until we come across one who is all-loving? And one who is all-loving, how did he make himself so? Perhaps he started

with the same nature, the same instincts we find in the average human being—love, hate and all the dual emotions. Gradually, however, he conquered them by establishing in his life one fundamental Principle. Now that Principle can be established only as we begin to think less and less of the mortal aspects of our nature, and more and more of the Divine. Our self-will, our desires, our sense of failure and deception—all these things we discard, and not merely say, “Thy Will be done!” but try to abide by that Will. Often hard experiences are needed to teach us how to do this truly and sincerely. Sometimes through bitter suffering we come to realize that it is better to make ourselves over to God’s power, because we know so little how to protect and to preserve ourselves.

In our ignorance we pray intensely for this or that, and it is not given to us or, if it is given, we find that still there is a lack; so at last we learn to say: “Give what Thou thinkest best; I surrender myself wholly to Thee.” Thus, in time, the mortal man becomes partaker of immortal Being; his stature grows, his littleness fades away, he loses his self-limitation. Often a man loses himself in the wrong way. For instance, when he is angry, when he flies into a rage, he says, “For a moment I lost myself.” If, instead of this, we could truly lose ourselves in God-consciousness, in the consciousness of Truth, it would do us infinite good; it would transform our whole existence and help to infuse into the life of the world another atmosphere.

Again and again—morning, noon and night—we need to be reminded of our true being. “Man is not merely the creature of God, he is one with God. He has not simply the image of the Creator impressed upon him; he is an integral part of the Creator.”

We feel a natural pride if we have noble blood in our

veins, if in the direct line of our ancestors there have been men of great name; yet the noblest blood of all is that which we possess as children of the Most High—descendants of the infinite, all-mighty Being. Here is where we enter into the fulness of life; here is where we realize true brotherhood; here is the Truth which cures us of our failures and sins and sorrows. In the Hindu Scriptures they have a saying that if a man with faith utters the Name of the Lord, he is at once made whole, and there is a parable which illustrates this:

Once a man wanted to cross the ocean from India to Ceylon, but he had no means of going. So he went to a devotee of the great Incarnation, Rama, and asked his aid in accomplishing his purpose. The devotee handed him a small, rolled-up package and said, "Here, take this! Carry it with you and you can walk upon the water. So long as you believe in it, you will be absolutely safe." The man was delighted and immediately started to walk across the sea. At first he was filled with faith, then doubt entered into him. "How can there be anything," he thought, "with power enough to keep me from drowning!" He should have restrained his curiosity until he had finished his journey, but he did not. He unrolled the package, and found within it only the name, "Rama," written there. "What!" he exclaimed in disgust, "Just a word? Only a word?" and immediately he went down.

Many times we go into a temple or a great place of worship, and find no point of contact there, and the next moment, perhaps, without any occasion, with no setting and nothing whatsoever in the way of outer glamour, we make a living connection with our innermost being. How do we account for these things? Wherein lies the secret? It lies in our faith, our feeling. When we are full of feeling, when our faith is kindled and our whole life is in tune, then our own

divine nature opens before us spontaneously and this provides us with all that we need every hour, every moment; and more than that—we are able to suffuse the world around us with that same vibrant consciousness.

Look at the life of Mahatma Gandhi. What is he? A man. In appearance there is nothing about him that is great or majestic. He himself used to say, "I am a mere pigmy." What is it then that gives him such tremendous power over the hearts of men? Complete self-dedication. He has emptied himself utterly and let God dwell within.

This is the point that I want to make: if our hands and hearts are already filled with worries, with dejection and doubt and all kinds of thoughts that are of no value to us, there will not be any room for the thoughts which bring healing and helpfulness. And that is why Lord Buddha said: Let a man be bereft of self; let him destroy this ego! This does not mean that we should destroy the real sense of being, it means getting rid of that element which gives us trouble and, by throwing upon us the weight of self, causes us to be upset and to upset others.

"I am of such and such a family! I am important! I am different—so sensitive that I cannot endure anything!" When all such conceptions are brushed aside and we allow Truth, God, the almighty One, the eternal Presence to fill our whole being, then our life becomes radiant and radiant life reflects only one thing—the light of God, His love, His majesty. Then we are blessed and we have the power to bless others.

Simply, like a child, Christ used to say to those who came to be healed: "Do you believe that I can do these things?" and they said: "Yea, Lord!" and He became an instrument for the Almighty. It is the man who has not forgotten his divine heritage who does real good to himself and to the

world. When we remember that we are part of that infinite One, then He takes our hands and works with them, He takes our mind and thinks with it, He takes our heart and loves everyone with it. In fact, as we make a complete dedication of self, He alone dwells within us. It requires courage. It is not for the negative person or for the one who is afraid of what is going to happen, who says, "If I take my mind off my business, how will things continue?" That is not the thought for the real Christian or Hindu or Buddhist or for anyone who wants to follow the path of Truth. If we desire to follow Truth, we must learn to love it, hold on to it, and radiate it. What we think, what we have constantly in our consciousness we do radiate. There is no other way to express it.

Religion is not a question of pretense. We have too much of that in the world. Man forgets the real redeeming Power and thinks that he is going to be saved through form. Can the almighty Spirit be contained in books, in creeds, in formulas? He is infinite, all-abiding. When we find Him in our heart of hearts, we find Him everywhere, and if we do not find Him there, we find Him nowhere. Unless that vision opens for us, nothing is opened for us and we go on struggling and striving to find peace. But the Source of peace is locked within ourselves. Let us unlock it! As Kabir says, "The lock of error shuts the gate; open it with the key of love!" Know that hatred is not conquered by hatred, evil is not overcome by evil. When we dedicate ourselves to the all-loving One, He takes possession of us and then all is well. This may sound to you as not practical for a man or a woman who has duties to perform in the world. But why is it not? What can be more practical than to use these hands, this mind, this heart in conjunction with that One who can use them best, from whom the power to use them comes?

We have to change our trend of mind, that is all. Instead of limiting ourselves with the concepts of name and form—I am this or that; I am rich or poor; I am efficient or incapable—it is for us to realize that beyond our lesser consciousness there is the great Consciousness, beyond the small, personal self there is another, an infinite Self, pervading and permeating all. When thought of That enters and takes possession of us, then the finite blends with the Infinite, then the small becomes vast.

It is for us, therefore, to remind ourselves that we are not as we seem, to attach ever less importance to our material heritage, and, first and last, to think of the supreme Power from whom our life comes and who alone can sustain us. This life of ours can be so dedicated to that Power that we shall never seem severed from It. Let us remind ourselves of this, not just now and then but at all times—morning, night and noon and even in the hours of failure—that thinking of Him daily and hourly who is our true being, we shall become one with Him.

Perfect reliance on God is life, my son, and I-ness and my-ness are death.

—Sri Ramakrishna.

For the Lord bestoweth His blessings there where He findeth the vessels empty . . . and the more he by contempt of himself dieth to himself, so much the more speedily grace cometh.

—Imitation of Christ.

Self is the lord of self, who else could be the Lord?

—Gautama Buddha.

To renounce self does not mean to renounce life. On the contrary it means to strengthen our true life by renouncing the life of the flesh.

—Leo Tolstoy.

THE PATIENT SERVANT

By St. Francis de Sales

Do not limit your patience to this or that kind of trial, but extend it universally to whatever God may send to befall you. . . . A really patient servant of God is as ready to bear inglorious troubles as those which are honorable. A brave man can easily bear with contempt, slander and false accusation from an evil world; but to bear such injustice at the hands of good men, of friends and relations is a great test of patience. . . . For just as the sting of a bee hurts far more than that of a fly, so the injuries or contradictions we endure from good people are much harder to bear than any others. But it is a thing which very often happens, and sometimes two worthy men who are both highly well-intentioned after their own fashion, annoy and even persecute one another grievously.

Be patient, not only with respect to the main trials which beset you, but also under the accidental and accessory annoyances which arise out of them. We often find people who imagine themselves ready to accept a trial in itself who are impatient of its consequences. We hear one man say, "I should not mind poverty were it not that I am unable to bring up my children and receive my friends as handsomely as I desire." Another says, "I should not mind were it not that the world will suppose it is my own fault;" while another would patiently bear to be the subject of slander provided nobody believed it. Others again, accept one side of a trouble but fret against the rest; as, for instance, believing themselves to be patient under sickness, only fretting against their inability to obtain the best advice, or at the inconvenience they are to their friends.

But, dear friend, be sure that we must patiently accept, not sickness only, but such sickness as God chooses to send,

in the place, among the people, and subject to the circumstances which He ordains; and so with all other troubles. If any trouble comes upon you, use the remedies with which God supplies you, . . . but having done so, wait whatever result He wills with perfect resignation.

Follow St. Gregory's advice: when you are justly blamed for some fault you have committed, humble yourself deeply and confess that you deserve the blame. If the accusation be false, defend yourself quietly, denying the fact; this is but due respect for truth and your neighbor's edification. But if after you have made your true and legitimate defense you are still accused, do not be troubled, and do not try to press your defense; you have had due respect for truth, have the same now for humility. By acting thus you will not infringe either a due care for your good name, or the affection you are bound to entertain for peace, humility and gentleness of heart.

Complain as little as possible of your wrongs; . . . above all, do not complain to people who are easily angered and excited. If it is needful to complain to someone, either as seeking a remedy for your injury, or in order to soothe your mind, let it be to some calm, gentle spirit, greatly filled with the love of God; for otherwise, instead of relieving your heart, your confidants will only provoke it to still greater disturbance; instead of taking out the thorn which pricks you, they will drive it further into your foot.

Some people when they are ill or in trouble or injured by anyone, restrain their complaints because they think (and that rightly) that to murmur betokens great weakness or a nervous mind; but, nevertheless, they exceedingly desire and manoeuvre to make others pity them, desiring to be considered as suffering with patience and courage. Now this is a kind of patience, certainly, but it is a spurious patience,

which in reality is neither more nor less than a very refined, very subtle form of ambition and vanity. A really patient man neither complains nor seeks to be pitied; he will speak simply and truly of his trouble without exaggerating its weight or bemoaning himself; if others pity him he will accept their compassion patiently, unless they pity him for some ill he is not enduring, in which case he will say so with meekness, and abide in patience and truthfulness, combatting his grief and not complaining of it. . . .

When you are sick, offer all your pains and weakness to our Dear Lord, . . . desire your recovery that you may serve Him . . . and be ready to die, if He wills it, to His glory, and that you may enter into His Presence.

Bear in mind that the bee while making its honey lives upon a bitter food; and in like manner we can never make acts of gentleness and patience, or gather the honey of the truest virtues, better than while eating the bread of bitterness and enduring hardness. And just as the best honey is that made from Thyme, a small and bitter herb, so that virtue which is practised amid bitterness and lowly sorrow is the best of all virtues.

THE MYSTIC'S PRAYER

By William Sharp

Lay me to sleep in sheltering flame,
O Master of the hidden Fire!
Wash pure my heart, and cleanse for me
My soul's desire.

In flame of sunrise bathe my mind,
O Master of the hidden Fire,
That when I wake, clear-eyed may be
My soul's desire.

WINGS

By Grace Irene Carroll

Somewhere, long ago, I came upon a little verse. The author I have, I regret to say, forgotten; but the lines, simple though they are, are so fraught with meaning they have clung in memory and have often proved an inspiration.

*"Be like the bird
That, halting in her flight
Awhile on bough too slight,
Feels it give way beneath her
And yet sings,
Knowing that she hath wings."*

A bird, a migratory thing, traveling onward from bough to bough, from tree to tree, its passage through the air symbolical of freedom, its shrill gush of song typifying joy, its blithe spirit, scornful of breaking branches, forever upheld by a consciousness of wings. A "scorner of the ground" Shelley calls the skylark in his beautiful little poem of that name.

"Be like the bird" we are adjured. To be like it we must catch its spirit of freedom, of utter joyousness, must join in the gladness of its bursts of song, share its reliance on the upholding power of wings, feel the aspiration of its upward flight, and imitate its scorn of earth and all lower things. When the bough beneath us gives way, when our reliance on money, health, friends, or other material things fails us, so that falling seems inevitable, we must realize that "underneath are the everlasting arms," that divine Power is still there to uphold us as the air upholds the bird. We need only use our wings—our realization of Truth—and help will be forthcoming so that we shall "mount as eagles."

No one but feels at times the giving way of the material

bough on which he stands. With every changing wind of mortal thought it sways and bends. Perhaps the wide-spread thought of "depression" has caught and drawn us into its eddy, our money has been swept away, and we begin to worry about ways and means. Depression is just another word for fear. The supply is always infinite and always available. God takes care of us just the same whether our bank deposits shrink or swell. Even if there is not as much to live on, there will always be just as much to live for; and when we trust perfectly, our needs are invariably supplied—our *needs*, not necessarily our *wants*. We want (desire) many things we do not really need. Sometimes when we cling too tightly to any of our possessions and learn to put our trust in them instead of in God, the divine Love removes these things from us for a while. But we shall never actually lack while we fully realize that the Lord is our shepherd and our provider. But to know true liberty, we need to learn, as the Bhagavad-Gita teaches, to be "free from all (thoughts of) acquiring or keeping," to practise detachment, and to eliminate all sense of "I" and "mine." Then the material bough may bend and sway all it likes—we shall be upheld in boundless space and our wings will support us.

We cannot, however, hope to fly before we have grown our wings. The young bird who attempts flight too early falls to the ground. We must understand spiritual laws and learn how to live in harmony with them before we can receive the rewards of so doing. We must learn to *rely* on divine Power before it can come to our assistance; we must *know* that our wings are there to fly with before we can begin to use them. "Ask and ye shall receive" we are admonished. Always the asking precedes the receiving. So, then, if there is a sense of seeming loss, remedy it by right thought. Nothing in this world ever goes from us or comes to us except as Deity

directs. If our money has temporarily gone from us, it has undoubtedly been directed to some channel where it can do more good; for it belongs primarily to God, not to us. We are merely custodians of it. So long as we keep ourselves correctly adjusted toward its possession and toward its Giver, and learn to rise above dependence on material things, prosperity will continue to flow to us and there will be no withholding of any good thing. Many, it is true, fail to realize abundance through spiritual methods; but this is because they have a mistaken idea of it. We cannot seek to manipulate the divine Power for selfish ends and expect to meet with any success. Our motives must be right. But when we leave the broken bough of belief that we are sustained by material things, and substitute the absolute faith that God is the sustaining principle of our being, we shall mount in the freedom of that realization to a sense of absolute security and trust. The broken bough cannot let us down if we but use our wings.

Is there some break in the manifestation of good health? Have we lit upon a bough too frail to hold us—met an accident, taken a cold, or in some other way fallen out of harmony? Do we fail to manifest the perfection that is ours inherently as children of God? Let us look to our wings. Are we using them, or are we merely falling to earth without a struggle? When symptoms of inharmony of any sort appear, we should be instantly vigilant to combat them. Would the bird mount when the limb snaps if it did not at once exercise its wings? Neither can we unless we promptly turn our attention to the upholding power of the spirit within. "Lo, I am with you always." The protecting, sustaining power of Spirit is forever available, and only by using it can we hope to overcome the insistent complaints of the physical body. When inharmony in any form assails us and the

bough seems about to break with the weight, let us stretch our wings and mount spiritward instantly, as the bird does. If we wait until we have fallen and have already hit the ground, it will be only that much more difficult for us to start the upward flight. The bird is indifferent to the cracking branch as he bursts into song and takes flight. Let us "be like the bird."

*"With thy clear keen joyance languor cannot be,
Shadow of annoyance never came near thee,"*

Shelley wrote of his skylark. Can we not emulate this diminutive spirit of joy? When earthly things no longer satisfy, when human love disappoints or fails us, let us still remember our wings. There is refuge and solace in the all-enfolding divine Love. Even if, perhaps, we seemingly are left alone, with none to cherish or protect, we yet may find comfort in the divine Presence, leave the broken bough, take wing, and soar heavenward. God's love forever presses for recognition, ever flows in an unbroken current toward us. "It is eternal, all-pervading, unchangeable, immovable, everlasting," says the Gita. So, then, let us sing, rejoice, and be glad-hearted like the little bird, and leave sorrow, mourning, and tears for those who weakly fall to the ground and will not exercise their wings. He who "dwells in the secret place of the Most High" expresses his joy in a cheerful countenance, in a heart free from sorrow, in making others joyous and happy like himself. Let us use our wings! Let us be, like the tiny song-bird, a gladdener of other hearts!

Scorn the ground! Scorn the lower things! Let those who have not yet grown their wings grovel in the dust of earth if they will. But we who have become conscious of our wings, who have learned wisdom and are being guided by the Light of Truth—let us mount! mount! Lift the inner vision! Rise into the free air of spirituality, the high con-

sciousness of God! In this transcendent state of mind breaking boughs cannot disturb. The starry zenith is above, the wide sky, the freedom of the open heavens—the knowledge of our oneness with Spirit. Bathed in the glorious sunlight of Truth, let us sing, like the sons of God which we are, for joy! For we, too, are migratory things, halting only for a little time on the frail bough of mortal life. We are traveling homeward to God. Let us make the world hear the exultant gladness of our song as we go and, like the bird, scorn the breaking branches beneath us.

Realization of the oneness of Being has power to lift us into the peace and freedom of our inherent divinity. Within reach of all are spiritual forces that are sufficient to meet any issue of life—health, finances, happiness, or prosperity. Let us be willing to let go our hold on lower things—the tendency to criticise and gossip, the inclination to worry over health, to fear loss or sorrow, to complain and magnify our ills; and let us instead grow fragrant with love, thankful for the joy in all things created which wells in our hearts, appreciative of the gloriously inspiring beauty of the world in which we live, grateful for the bountiful goodness which provides for us continually. Let us praise Him from whom all blessings flow! “Be like the bird!”

Men make a mistake, my dear Lucilius, if they hold that anything good, or evil either, is bestowed upon us by Fortune; it is simply the raw materials of good and ill that she gives to us, the sources of things which, in our keeping, will develop into good and ill. For the soul is more powerful than any sort of fortune; by its own agency it guides its affairs in either direction, and of its own power can produce a happy life or a wretched one.

—Seneca.

HEALTH

By Inayat Khan

(Reprinted from the Sufi Quarterly.)

Health is an orderly condition caused by the regular working of the mechanism of the physical body. The regular working of the physical body depends upon the weather, diet, the balance between action and repose, and the condition of the mind.

Many think that it is some deformity of the body, a curve in the spine or a cavity in the brain that affects the mind. But few realize that very often the mind produces an irregularity in the spine or in the brain, causing thereby an illness.

The ordinary point of view is to regard an illness as a physical disorder, which, by the means of material remedies, can be cured. Then there is another point of view of deep-thinking people, who say that by not taking notice of an illness, or suggesting oneself being well, one can be restored to health. This point of view can also be exaggerated, as some claim that illness is an illusion, that it has no existence of its own. The ordinary point of view also can be exaggerated when one thinks that the medicine is the only means of cure and that thought has little to do with actual illness. Both these persons, the one who sees from the ordinary point of view, and the other who sees from a deeper point of view, will find arguments for and against their idea. People go as far as saying that medicine must not be touched by the faithful, and some affirm that an illness is as real as health. It is in the absence of illness that a person can easily call pain an illusion, but when one is suffering, then it is difficult for him to call it an illusion.

The question: "Who is subject to illness, a spiritual person or a material person?" may be answered thus. A spiritual person who discards physical laws is subject to illness as

much as a material person who discards spiritual laws. No doubt a spiritually inclined person is supposed to have less chance of being ill, because his spirit has become harmonious by spirituality; he creates harmony and he radiates it. He keeps to the realm of nature, in tune with the Infinite. Nevertheless, a spiritual person's life in the midst of the world is as the life of a fish on the land—the fish is a creature of water: its sustenance, its joy, its happiness is in the water. A spiritual soul is made for solitude; his joy and happiness is in solitude. A spiritual person set in the midst of the world by Destiny, feels out of place, and the ever jarring influences of those around him, and the continually striking impressions which disturb his finer senses, make it a greater possibility for him to become ill than for those who push their way in the crowd of the world and are ready to be pushed away.

A spiritual soul is an old soul, according to the Eastern term. Even a spiritually-minded young person shows the nature of the aged; but at the same time, spirituality is a perpetual youth. A spiritual person admires all things, appreciates all things, enjoys all things to their fullness. Therefore, if one says the spiritual person is like an old person, it is true; and if one says the spiritual person is like a young person, it is true also.

People have lost the conception of normal health these days when the standard of normal health is below the real conception of health. To be healthy is not only to be muscular; to be really healthy is to be able to enjoy and appreciate life fully. To be healthy means to be thoughtful. The one who can feel deeply shows the sign of health. It is not surprising if a material person becomes ill, nor is it amazing if a spiritual person is unwell. The former becomes ill because he has lost his rhythm, the latter is ill because he could

not keep to the rhythm—the rhythm which is not his own. Be one spiritual or material, since one has to live in the midst of the world, one shares the conditions of all those who are far and near, and one subjects oneself to the influences, desirable or undesirable, coming from all around. One cannot close one's eyes, nor can one close one's heart to the impressions which continually fall upon one. The best one can do is to keep a careful watch against all that comes upon one, causing irregularity, inharmony and disorder, and be resigned to all one has to pass through, and be courageous to get over all that keeps one back from health and perfection.

THE MYSTERIOUS

By Albert Einstein

The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and stand rapt in awe, is as good as dead; his eyes are closed. . . . To know that what is impenetrable to us really exists, manifesting itself as the highest wisdom and the most radiant beauty which our dull faculties can comprehend only in their most primitive forms—this knowledge, this feeling, is at the centre of true religiousness. In this sense, and in this sense only, I belong in the ranks of devoutly religious men.

It is enough for me to contemplate the mystery of conscious life perpetuating itself through all eternity, to reflect upon the marvelous structure of the universe which we can dimly perceive, and to try humbly to comprehend even an infinitesimal part of the intelligence manifested in nature.

The God that ruleth the city is Love.—*Zeno, the Stoic.*

I AM THANKFUL

A Letter from a Mother to a Daughter

The following thoughts are taken from a letter written by one who this past year had most of her worldly goods swept away in the great depression—one who was not used to a small income but had always had ample means not only to live in comfort in her own home and country, but to travel abroad and enjoy the best that other lands had to offer—one, moreover, who is no longer young, save in heart, having lived upon this earth eighty years.

Many in her present circumstances would make of the rich past an excuse for bemoaning a more restricted present or would sink into the dull lethargy of physical old age. Not so with this rare spirit, unspoiled by all that life has brought her. In her soul is nothing but thanksgiving for the blessings that are still hers. Vibrant, warm and living her words flow forth from an eternal youthfulness, from a gallant courage, and from an ever-springing sense of beauty which transforms loss and sorrow—her loss and sorrow—into a deeper understanding of human existence.

May others reading these words catch a little of the fire which illumines them and be warmed and comforted thereby.

The letter is written from France.

June 29, 1932

My darling child—always my child: Your letter came this morning and brought joy to my heart. The best news of all is that you are well and happy in your work.

I feel as you do, that something good will come for us all out of these trials and tribulations, as gold is refined through being put in the furnace. If it is gold, it will come out purified and the dross will remain behind; if it is not gold, nothing rare remains.

We must none of us live in the past, for that is gone forever—nothing but its effects on us remains and we must build our present and future with what materials are left; and perhaps we shall build better for the lessons experience has taught us, and we shall not make so many mistakes.

We have left to us each other, and the love and sympathy which hold us together. I feel so *blessed* in having all of you to love me, and a few rare and true friends, and health in my old age, and eyes to see all the beauty around me.

I was so struck by the courage and gaiety of a bent old peasant woman who walks more than a mile from the station to deliver telegrams. She brought one to me yesterday, and she looked very warm and weary. I asked her to come in and rest and have a cool drink. She is about my age.

She said "*le bon Dieu*" had been very good to her, that notwithstanding the fact that she fell a few years ago and broke her arm so that it was quite useless (she cannot raise it to her head), she can manage to dress her hair with one hand, and her *legs* are sound and she can walk and earn her living, and that was something to be thankful for. Only she regretted that she could not "*labourer*" (labor) any more, for she had always loved to be out in the fields ploughing. "*C'est si beau*" (it's so beautiful) she said.

It almost made me weep to see her so brave and seemingly contented with so little. Her cheeks are still rosy and her eyes bright and I heard her laughing with the cook.

What a lesson! All she gets is one franc for delivering a telegram rain or shine, and her *pourboire* is one franc. I gave her five—twenty cents. The lesson she taught me in courage and patience was worth much, much more. The poor old thing!—her only complaint, that she could not plough any more, as if she had been deprived of a great luxury.

I am fortunate to be in this quiet, lovely spot, where life is simple and reasonable, and where one has time to think—and read—and dream.

I wish that I had some talent or ability to do something worth while, to add my “bit” to the world and leave some little beauty in my trail; but it is too late now. Body and brain tire easily, and without them creation of anything is impossible.

I am thankful that I can still see and feel and appreciate Beauty and Goodness, and that I can still feel my eyes overflow with tears when my heart is touched by some great, unselfish achievement, some lovely work of art done for the love of it by the artist, some uplifting poem, or some exquisite harmony that consoles one for the many sordid and ugly things of life; and that nature has lost none of her charm for me—or her wonder!

—G. S. J.

LIGHT, THE REDEEMER

From the Pistis Sophia

[The Pistis Sophia, from which the following greatly condensed extract is taken, is a Coptic Gnostic document, dating back to the early part of the Christian era, probably to the latter half of the third century. According to Mr. G. R. S. Mead, who has given us the present scholarly English rendering, a veil of uncertainty hangs over its source, there being little or nothing to indicate from which particular Gnostic or heretical sect it is descended.

The matter it contains is lofty, and although it is largely concerned with the teachings of Jesus touching upon Angels and Archangels, Principalities and Powers, there are passages which carry the mind to the Supreme Wisdom of the Indo-Aryans. Reincarnation is openly taught, reminding us of

the fact that it was an accepted belief among many members of the primitive Church and was expounded by certain of the Church Fathers. In this record, the fate of the soul from the passing out of one body to the entrance into another is given, fitted of course into the complex heirarchical system of the Gnostic universe.

Pistis Sophia, meaning literally Faith Wisdom, is according to some the personification of divine Wisdom, but Mead says of her that "she would seem to be intended to represent the type of the faithful, repentant soul." More than that, it would seem that she is the soul, caught in the cycle of necessity, originally aspiring toward the One Light, only to be misled and betrayed by the illusion of self and separateness, whose lure she mistakes for the true Radiance. It is the true Radiance, for without that nothing can be. As the great Upanishad says: "When That shines, everything shines after It; by Its light all is lighted." Even evil can not attract, bereft of that Power, for It is the only power in the universe, but it can be used in many ways.

So Pistis Sophia falls, caught in the snare of Self-willed, depicted here as a cosmic entity; and so do we all fall, thinking to find in egotistic achievement, in sense and self, our fulfillment. Blind trails, leading nowhere! Pistis Sophia discovers that instead of adding to her light, Self-willed robs her of the light that she has and leaves her in chaos, drained of her native strength, yet forced to struggle incessantly against cruel and hateful forces which seek her final extinction. She retains, however, the memory of the light, holds to her faith in it even in the midst of uttermost darkness and continued denial, and it is this unshakable faith that ultimately wins for her her deliverance.

Strange and archaic as the story is, it brings us the pulse of a new revelation, the record of a tradition not yet grown

dim, a tradition that burned like a flame in the veins of the writers of this document.

The scene of the story is the Mount of Olives where we find Jesus (and in this record he is always Jesus and never the Christ) speaking with his disciples, soon after his resurrection, preparing them to be instructed in the mysteries of the inner worlds. They had, up to this time, looked solely to the First Mystery; Jesus now is ready to spread before them a more detailed plan. From which we may gather that the original Christian revelation laid its stress on the One and on a simple approach to It, but occult tendencies, from Egyptian and other sources, combined with the complex nature of the human mind, soon superimposed a complicated system, which they put upon the lips of the risen Saviour.]

THE STORY

And it came to pass then, on the fifteenth day of the moon Tybi, which is the day on which the moon is full, on that day then, when the sun had come forth on his going, that there came forth behind him a great light-power, shining most exceedingly, and there was no measure to the light conjoined with it. For it came out of the Light of lights. And that light-power came down over Jesus and surrounded him entirely, while he was seated removed from his disciples. And the disciples had not seen Jesus, for their eyes were darkened because of the great light in which he was. But they saw only the light, . . . one great, immeasurable glory of light; it stretched from under the earth right up to heaven. And when the disciples saw that light, they fell into great fear and great agitation. Then Jesus ascended or soared into the height, shining most exceedingly.

It came to pass then, when Jesus had reached the heaven, after three hours, that all the powers of heaven fell into agitation, and all men who are in the world and also the

disciples, and all thought: Peradventure the world will be rolled up. The disciples wept together, saying: "What will then be?"

Then on the ninth hour of the morrow, the heavens opened and they saw Jesus descend, shining most exceedingly, more radiantly than at that hour when he had ascended. And it came to pass then, when the disciples saw this, that they feared exceedingly and were in agitation. Then Jesus, the compassionate and tender-hearted, spake with them, saying, "Take courage. It is I, be not afraid."

It came to pass then, when the disciples had heard this word, that they said: "Lord, if it be thou, withdraw thy light-glory into thyself that we may be able to stand, otherwise our eyes are darkened, and we are agitated, and the whole world also is in agitation because of the great light which is about thee."

[Those who are familiar with the Vedic teaching cannot fail to be struck by the resemblance here to the verse in the Isa Upanishad, running: "O Pushan! O Sun, sole traveler of the heavens, controller of all, . . . withdraw Thy rays and gather up Thy burning effulgence! Now through Thy grace I behold Thy blessed and glorious form!" Also it is strikingly reminiscent of the XIth chapter of the Gita, where Arjuna cries to the Lord, Sri Krishna, after beholding His universal form: "'I see Thee shiningly effulgent everywhere—blazing all around like the blazing fire and the sun, dazzling to the sight and immeasurable. . . . O Mighty-armed, seeing Thine immeasurable form, . . . the worlds as well as I are agitated with terror. . . . O Abode of the universe, have mercy! I desire to see Thee as before. . . .' The great-souled One, having assumed again His gentle form, pacified him (Arjuna) who was terrified." Jesus then tells his disciples that his earthly ministry having been

achieved, he has been re-invested by the First Mystery with his triple robe of glory, embracing the whole of the powers of the universe which he will now reveal to them. He tells them how, ascending, he entered the twelve aeons or light-worlds and contacted their lords and tyrants, their powers of light and of light misused, till finally he arrived at the veiled portals of the thirteenth aeon.]

"It came to pass then, when I had arrived at their veils, that they drew apart of their own accord and opened themselves for me. I entered in into the thirteenth aeon and found Pistis Sophia below the thirteenth aeon all alone, and no one of them with her.

"It came to pass when Pistis Sophia was in the thirteenth aeon, in the region of all her brethren the invisibles,—it came to pass then, by command of the First Mystery, that Pistis Sophia gazed into the height. She saw the light of the veil of the Treasury of the Light, and she longed to reach to that region, and sang praises to the light of the height.

"It came to pass then, that all the rulers who are below hated her because she had desired to go into the height and be above them all. For this cause then they were enraged against her and hated her, as did the great triple-powered Self-willed, he who had become disobedient in that he desired to rule over the whole thirteenth aeon and those who are below it. And he emanated out of himself a great lion-faced power, and out of his matter in him he emanated a host of other very violent material emanations, and sent them into the regions below, to the parts of the chaos, in order that they might there lie in wait for Pistis Sophia and take away her power out of her. It came to pass then thereafter that she looked below and saw his light-power and she knew not that it was that of the triple-powered Self-willed but she thought that it came out of the veil of the Treasury of

the Light. And she thought to herself: I will go into that region and take the light and thereout fashion for myself light aeons, so that I may go to the Light of lights.

"This then thinking, she went forth from her own region and came into the regions of the chaos and drew nigh to that lion-faced light-power to devour it. But all the material emanations of Self-willed surrounded her, and the great lion-faced light-power devoured all the light-powers in Sophia and her matter was thrust into the chaos. When this befell, Sophia became very greatly exhausted and cried out most exceedingly to the Light of lights:

" 'O Light of lights in whom I have had faith from the beginning, hearken now then, O Light, unto my repentance. Save me, O Light, for evil thoughts have entered into me.

I gazed, O Light, into the lower parts and saw there a light, thinking: I will go to that region in order that I may take that light. And I went and found myself in the darkness which is the chaos below. And I cried for help but my voice hath not reached out of the darkness. Let not this darkness submerge me, and let not this chaos shroud my power.

Save me because of the rulers who hate me. When I sought the light they gave me darkness; and when I sought my power they gave me matter."

Jesus continued in this discourse and said: "Pistis Sophia sang praises in a second repentance, saying thus:

" 'Light of lights in whom I have had faith, help me and save me through thy mysteries.

For it is thou, O Light, in whose light I have had faith and in whose light I have trusted from the beginning.

Thou art my saviour and thou art my deliverer and thou art my mystery, O Light.

Turn thee, O Light, and save me from the hands of the merciless.' "

"Pistis Sophia again continued:

'O Light in whom I have trusted, give ear to my repentance. Save me quickly at the time when I shall cry unto thee.

For my time is vanished like a breath and I have become matter.

Because of the voice of the fear and the power of Self-willed my power is vanished.

But thou, O Lord, art Light eternal, and dost visit them who are forever oppressed.' "

[Often crushed by circumstance and in despair, we cry out for the light. But when it does not come, we lose faith and turn away. No help came to Pistis Sophia, yet as the powers of darkness assailed her with increasing venom, her prayer grew ever more passionate and insistent, nor did she once give way to doubt.]

"O Light," (she cries) "let my voice reach unto thy dwelling place.

My light is diminished in me and I have cried up to the Light with all the light in me, and I have stretched forth my hands unto thee.

My power hath trusted in the Light when it was among those of the height; and it hath trusted in it when it was in the chaos below.

For it is the Light which hath compassion on us and delivereth us, and a great saving mystery is in it."

[Various and terrible are the powers which threaten Pistis Sophia—serpent-faced, lion and dragon-faced powers, but in the end, she treads them under foot and at the command of the Saviour, continues to stand, like the Virgin with her heel on the serpent, upon the most evil of them all, the seven-faced-basilisk emanation. For the hour comes when her repentance is accepted by the First Mystery because she has

had faith in the light and has endured to the end. And that Mystery sends a great light-stream through Jesus who with his angels lifts her beyond chaos and darkness, and restores her to her own sphere.

It is impossible to give more than the briefest outline of this ancient story, and even that is incomplete. We close with an excerpt which shows Sophia on the upward path of light, this time exulting: }

“I will give thanks unto thee, O Light, for thou art a saviour; thou art a deliverer for all time.

I will give thanks unto thee, O Light, that thou hast saved me, and for thy wondrous works unto the race of men.”

When I failed of my power, thou hast given me power; and when I failed of my light, thou didst fill me with purified light.

I will give thanks unto thee, O Light, that thou hast saved me, and for thy wondrous works in the race of men.”

And Jesus continued and said: “It came to pass then, that I made the light-power which I had sent to save her become a light-wreath round her head, so that from now on Self-willed could not have dominion over her. And all the evil matters in her were shaken, and all were purified in her. And the purification of the pure light which was in Pistis Sophia gave power to the light of my light-power which had become a wreath round her head. And she praised my light-power, saying:

“ ‘The light hath become a wreath round my head, and I shall not depart from it.

And though all the matters be shaken, yet shall I not be shaken. And though all my matters perish and remain in the chaos, yet shall I not perish.

For the Light is with me, and I myself am with the Light.’ ”

REPORT

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

A most significant Autumn festival was celebrated in the Temple of the Universal Spirit, at Ananda-Ashrama, La Crescenta, California, during October 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th, corresponding to the Durga Puja, or Divine Mother's Feast of India. Each evening there was a special Service held in the Temple at 8:15, when Swami Paramananda through prayer, meditation and impromptu inspirational talks conveyed the spirit of the great occasion. On Friday evening, October 8th, in addition to the regular Service, a banquet was held in honor of the occasion, a large number of friends attending. Every evening distinguished musicians contributed their share by rendering delightful music—Mr. and Mrs. Jascha Gegna and Mr. Max Starick, violins; Mr. Gegna's son, 'cello; Mrs. Edith Dunne, harp, and Alice Afsprung, organ; while Gayatri Devi played lovely Indian melodies on the esraj. It was interesting to observe that some of the faithful friends of the work drove between fifty and one hundred miles every evening in order to attend the Services. On Sunday, the 9th, Swami Paramananda, prior to his departure for Boston, concluded this festival, speaking at the eleven o'clock Service on "Harmony of Life," and at three-fifteen on "Our Divine Protection." During his absence all lectures and classes will be faithfully carried on by Gayatri Devi of India.

VEDANTA CENTRE OF BOSTON

Swami Paramananda returned directly to Boston and arrived on October 13th. That same evening he conducted a special Service in the Chapel of the Vedanta Centre, following which, a reception was held there in honor of his homecoming. During October, he has spoken as usual every Sunday morning and evening, his subjects including the following themes: "Our Share in the Cosmic," "Harmony of Life," "Conquest of Fear," "Have Faith," "Source of Our Strength," and "Divine Protection." Also each Tuesday evening, he has delivered discourses on "Practical Lessons from the Bhagavad-Gita," and on Saturday afternoon has given inspirational talks from the Cohasset Ashrama rock.

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VEDANTA MONTHLY

Message of the East



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JAN 3 1933

DECEMBER, 1932

Christ: The Divine Talisman

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Message of the East

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."

—*Ezekiel*

"Light shall come again from the East."

—*Tyndall*

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DECEMBER, 1932

No. 10

TONIGHT AS I PRAYED

By *Swami Paramananda*



TONIGHT, as I prayed before Thee,
O Lord!

I was more conscious of those
Who have hurt me and caused me
great pain.

My heart was full of love for them,
As I prayed and implored Thee to give
them peace.

Oh, what a sweet solace filled my
whole being!

I found a new delight,
As Thy light burst upon my soul.

I saw, as never before,
What it is to love one's enemies,—
To bless them that bring a curse
upon us;

And do good to them that turn their hate
upon us;

And to be able to pray from the depth
of our being—fervently—

For those who abuse and persecute us.

O Lord, giver of all true blessing,

Keep this vision with me—

Though I be stripped of all earthly goods!

Amen.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

At Thy Feet forever, let me swing forever in Thy Cradle
of Light that hangs from heaven with strings of gold.

—*Puran Singh.*

The serene, silent beauty of a holy life is the most powerful
influence in the world next to the might of God. —*Pascal.*

Peace is not made in documents, but in the hearts of men.

—*Herbert Hoover.*

We win by tenderness; we conquer by forgiveness.

—*F. W. Robertson.*

One bitter feeling toward another shuts out the whole
sunlight of God's love.

—*Source Unknown.*

Like as a mother at the risk of her life watches over her
only child, so also let every one cultivate toward all beings
a boundless, friendly mind.

—*Teachings of Buddha.*

Come and hail this Infant Birth!

Come and make a joyful sound;

God with man henceforth is found,

He is come to dwell on earth.

As a Little Boy He's here;

Long desired, we hold Him dear;

Very precious shall He be.

—*Jacopone da Todi.*

They clamor and fight, they doubt and despair, they know
no end to their wranglings.

Let your life come amongst them like a flame of light, my
child, unflickering and pure, and delight them into silence.

—*Rabindranath Tagore.*

Shall not loveliness be loved forever? —*Euripides.*

First-born, Omnipotent, whose heart is immensity!

—*Babylonian.*

CHRIST: THE DIVINE TALISMAN

By Swami Paramananda

How shall we express our rejoicing on this day of the beautiful Christ-child, when we remind ourselves of His birth?

Spirit of Christmas can never be conveyed by words of eloquence, but rather through feelings, tender feelings—the tenderest we are capable of conceiving.

Christmas is a symbol of that infinite tenderness and is interwoven with everything helpless and childlike. The concept is a very lovely one and did not come to us from the minds of theologians. It is the simple concept of hearts that longed to bring great abstract ideas and ideals down into living form. Under its influence, human hearts are aware of the divine touch, and even men who are given to cold calculation take part in singing hymns and decorating Christmas trees.

Fully to receive that tender Spirit, however, requires of us the practice of tenderness. That is why it is the custom on this day—and it is a beautiful custom—to extend love, to forget whatever harsh treatment we may have received, and to bring rejoicing. A father and a mother hide their tears in their child's presence. So here today, in the presence of the Christ-child, we remind ourselves of Him, and in so doing, forget the grievances, the sadness, the harrowing experiences of the world.

Learn the art of being tender; and rejoice! Shall there be preaching? No. It would be incongruous. Singing? Yes. You can express the spirit of joy through your song, through your understanding, and your smile.

It is an unchanging fact that there is always rejoicing in a household whenever a child is born. In India, I have known poor parents to give everything away at such a time

in a sort of ecstasy. It is a sacred thing, and infinitely more so when a divine Incarnation comes to us in the form of a child. There are those who see Him as coming in pomp and glory—that is the picture they draw. Rather it is through His sheer helplessness that He inspires the hearts of men—melts them. In the same way, may the hardness existent in the world be melted this very moment.

The symbolic Christ, the universal Christ, the spirit of Divinity, who incarnates with the birth of Jesus, dwells in every soul, but unless we can unveil that hidden Secret within us, that omnipotent, beautiful and beneficent One—delicate and tender—merely going through some ritual or observing a form will give us nothing.

Let us draw aside the veil which conceals the Christ within. Harshness is a veil. Hatred is a veil. The “grown-up,” calculating mind is a veil which always hides from us that radiant Spirit. This is a wonderful occasion for us to forget that we are grown-up. It is in the power of man to go backward in years—to grow younger by leaving behind him the thoughts and feelings that afflict and harass him.

Children have a remarkable gift for disarming people who come with feelings of age and self-importance. When our brow is feverish with anxious thoughts, doubts and misgivings, the hand of the little child is placed on our brow to soothe us, to quiet us, to make us feel that all is not wrong.

In the same way, a divine Incarnation comes to soothe the feverish world, to heal it with gentle hand—a hand that always heals.

Forms and customs have come down to us from year to year, from century to century. On Christmas Eve we see the candles lighted. Everywhere are lights!

The thing is, how may we enkindle that flame in our own hearts?

No matter how icy and how deep the snow, carol singers give their music on the streets. In many windows Christ-child altars are set up, and the people stop and gaze.

Let the world gaze today, the world which is so full of fear, misgiving and unwholesome thoughts. Let it forget its doubts and enter into the spirit of child-heartedness.

Men rejoiced when Christ was born, and they also rejoiced at the birth of the baby Krishna. Not all men, however. Evil hearts ever fear the light, the power of love, nobility and Truth. Therefore, if we would rejoice, we must make the heart a fitting altar.

Let us do so now!

Every heart that sings today in recognition of spiritual splendor is going to irradiate other hearts. If you find one who is grieved, try to lift him from that grief by your love, your understanding. Assure him, as the Wise Men were assured: "Do not be frightened—the hour of trouble is past. A new era is about to dawn!"

Wash the heart clean!

People of gross habits often are conscious of their uncleanness, when handling a little child. In India—at least I have known it to be so—a man who is given to smoking will wash his hands before touching a tiny baby. He is afraid of defiling something so pure and tender.

The same idea manifests in us. Whatever we may have done, there comes a day when we want to be made fresh and clean, in order that we may touch the Holy Child.

So, at this hour, let your mind and heart and your entire being be adorned with sanctity, for you are going to approach the new-born Christ!—not in the church, not in the chapel or the sanctuary, but in the depths of your own soul.

"In each human spirit is a Christ concealed!" You cannot escape from that fact. You may try to forget it, to bury

it in your consciousness, but it comes ever as a lovely, ethereal things that you cannot crush. It is our saving grace. When we learn to appreciate its beauty, its delicacy, just as we appreciate a beautiful, fragrant flower, then the Christ really is born within us, and all our grievances, our sadness, our sorrows melt away.

To my mind, the greatest spiritual deliverance is given by the child. Words are not capable of conveying the import of it all.

We are part of the world—each one of us—and when our hearts are filled with joy, we make this world more joyous. And remember that joy does not lie in the superficial “Merry Christmas.” It is the glowing happiness that comes to us as we recognize that there is a Saviour, not far from us, but born anew in our heart and carried there as our talisman.

As this feeling grows within us and expands our consciousness, we have nothing to fear. We are safeguarded constantly by that divine Presence.

Let us with true humility try to understand the significance of the holy birth within our soul,

That we may do nothing, say nothing, think nothing which can mar the beauty and meaning of this sacred occasion.

Let us send forth prayers—potent prayers from the depth of our being, out of the strength of our soul—to that One who has sent us Christ and the Christ-like.

May He be so moved by our feelings that He will send solace to those who suffer, no matter where they are—east, west, north or south.

For are we not, all brethren?—children of one Father?

Let us extend these thoughts, that we may enter into the consciousness of great brotherhood, which comes to the soul who realizes the spirit of God.

May He lift us and help us to lift others.

OBLATION

By *Lahladin*

Lord of my life!
My Master and my King!
Thou art so infinitely dear to me
It seems my very heart
Must slow dissolve
And flow—a crystal pool
At Thy dear feet.
And, gentle Lord,
If it should please Thee then
To lend Thine unclad feet
To its embrace,
Where'er they touch
Would water lilies spring
To bless Thee
With their fragrance
And their grace.

Now all those things which the multitude pursue [the common objects of human desire—wealth, power and the pleasures of the sense] not only provide no remedy for the maintenance of our being but actually hinder it, and are oftentimes the occasion of ruin to such as possess them, always to such as are possessed by them. . . . Happiness or unhappiness depends on the nature of the object whereon we fix our affections. Strife, envy, hatred and fear are the common penalty of loving perishable things. But love toward a thing infinite and eternal feeds the mind with pure joy and is wholly free from sorrow: this is to be greatly desired and strenuously sought for. —*Spinoza*.

Gladness of the heart is the life of man.—*Ecclesiasticus*.

DIVINE CHILD-HEARTEDNESS

By Sri Ramakrishna

(Compiled from various authenticated teachings of the Master and done into English by Manmatha Nath Chatterji.)

Verily I say unto you that the man that hath acquired true Wisdom, he that hath attained true Knowledge, hath his own distinctive marks to denote him.

Verily he becometh a simple child, unable to hurt anybody. Even as the sword of steel that hath been transformed into gold killeth not nor hurteth. And though he retaineth some form of egotism, as the golden sword retaineth its form as a sword, it is in form only, and not in reality.

As the rope retaineth its form even after it is burnt, and is but a length of ashes which a mere breath scattereth away: even so, the man of Wisdom and Knowledge retaineth in him some form of anger and indignation, but these are forms only, shadows, shadows—not real.

Lo, the little child hath no severity, no strictness at all about him.

He buildeth a house of cards, and crieth and screameth and jumpeth about in anger if anybody maketh to touch it; and lo, after a while, he scattereth it with his own hands and thinketh of it no more.

Lo, now he is severely strict about the golden cap he weareth on his head, but give him a paltry toy and he clappeth his hands in wild delight, and thinketh no more of the golden cap. And even so, I say unto you, are the marks of him that hath acquired Knowledge and Wisdom.

Verily, verily, I say unto you: pure and intense love for the Lord cometh not but to the pure mind in a pure body.

Blessed is he that remaineth and continueth a child all his life, pure as the morning dew, fresh as a flower and free as the air.

A GREAT TEACHER OF INDIA

By Sister Devamata

(Condensed from the "Vedanta Kesari" and concluded from the July issue of the "Message of the East.")

With the great majority who take up the religious life renunciation is a reiterated process. They drop the world and pick it up again, again drop it, until renouncing by force of increasing repetition becomes a daily act and a daily struggle. The reason of this is, they do not renounce that in themselves that ties them to the world. This was pre-eminently untrue of Swami Ramakrishnananda. He made one sweeping act of renunciation. . . . He cut the innermost cord. He renounced himself. His detachment was complete. I saw him meet disappointment, criticism, condemnation, antagonism, waxing and waning of his work, even loss by death, with a smile on his face. He would sit cross-legged on a rug near the north door of the monastery hall in the earlier Math at Mylapore; his powerful body bare to the waist, as was the custom under the burning skies of Madras, one hand holding his foot, and rocking gently back and forth with rhythmic regularity,—thus he would sit and tell me quite casually of some blow that had been struck at his calm and his courage.

He was not unfeeling. "If we cannot love others, if we cannot serve others, what are we here for?" were the frequent words on his lips. His heart was large and generous and overflowing with dispassionate love; but he was a Sannyasin—one who had renounced—and that meant he must be even-minded in praise and blame, honor and dishonor, victory and defeat. "When a man is vilified, yet shows no resentment or even annoyance," he said one day, "you may be sure he has conquered his ego and is completely detached."

It must not be imagined, however, that Swami Ramakrishnananda possessed a placid personality. He was too powerful, too positive in his reactions to be placid. Placidity is passive, negative, the absence of disturbance, not the result of a struggle lived out. True serenity, on the contrary, is the fruit of storm. It is the quiet of the harbor after riding the gale. It contains a depth, a latent force, which could spring from nothing less. All great souls who labor for humanity are storm-swept at times. Christ drove the money-changers before His wrath; He dealt scorching rebuke to the Pharisees. Swami Ramakrishnananda too had his moments of righteous indignation. . . .

The Swami rarely discussed worldly affairs. He did not read the newspapers. To the lay mind he might have seemed lacking in human interest, but in reality he was keenly concerned for his fellow-men. He believed, however, that true interest consisted, not in remaining human with them, but in helping them become divine. "Those who give up the world for the spiritual life are giving up the uncertain for the certain, the passing for the permanent," he reiterated. It was inevitable from this attitude of mind that he should dwell with great insistence on the value of renunciation. "All our power comes from renunciation," he declared again and again. "Only when we have given up our life, do we begin to live. . . ."

I saw Swami Ramakrishnananda very seldom during the heated hours of the day, but when the evening coolness began to fall, tempering the sun-scorch of mid-day, I would go across to the monastery, accomplish the simple duties I was allotted there, and assist at *Arati* (evening worship). Then I would take my place on the rug near the Swami in the monastery hall and listen—listen so intently that I was able to go home and write down later all that I had heard. Some-

times others were present, sometimes we were alone, but always the Swami talked with the same ardor of feeling. On one evening that is vivid in my memory, he spoke at length of the illusive spell which the world casts over us:

"As long as there is intense struggle," he said, "there are still desires which tie us to the world. We have not realized yet its complete hollowness. When we realize that, the way is easy. The world is a place where the unreal appears to be real and the real appears unreal. *Maya* (Illusion) makes us believe something to be where there is nothing, and nothing to be where there is something. It makes weakness seem all-powerful and the powerful seem weak. The poor sage in the forest, whose loin cloth is of bark and whose bed is the bare ground, appears to the world as a weakling; while the king on his throne in a glittering palace appears to it strong; but in reality it is the sage that is powerful. Compared to him the king on his throne is nothing. Recognizing this, kings in ancient times, when a sage came to their court, would come down from their throne and prostrate in the dust before him.

"The charm of *Maya* is so irresistible, it is only when God is gracious to us that we can lift the veil and get a little glimpse of Him. All *Maya* is localized in ego. Take away the ego and the whole structure of *Maya* will fall. . . ."

"If a man should see God, what would he ask for?" Sri Ramakrishna, the Master, said once. "Houses and lands? No: God-vision. Nothing less would seem worth while." So was it with Swami Ramakrishnananda. He had no quarrel with the world. He recognized its charm and beauty, but he knew that that charm was ephemeral, that beauty fleeting, while beneath them lay hidden the unchanging and everlasting. "Seek that and that only," was his constant cry. "Do not be content with the little finite things of this

world. Do not be satisfied with anything short of infinity. Let your ambition be infinite. Give up because you know that what you throw away is perishable, what you gain is imperishable and eternal. The more you can fix your mind on God and forget yourself, the more quickly will this be done." These words strike the keynote of the Swami's teachings. They were a continuous call to Infinitude.

The story is told that a great sage once came to the Temple of Dakshineswar on the Ganges, and when he prayed before the sacred image in the Shrine, the whole temple shook with the fervor of his prayer. So it seemed when Swami Ramakrishnananda conducted worship. As he intoned the holy texts, such pulsating ardor of devotion swept out from the Shrine on the waves of that chanting voice, the very walls of the monastery seemed to tremble.

Swami Ramakrishnananda was a worshipper by right of birth. From his earliest years he had the influence and training of an orthodox Brahmin home. His father was a learned Sanskrit scholar, deeply versed in the Scriptures, rigid in the observance of the traditions and religious usages of his caste, devout and austere. It was natural for the son to follow the same habit of life. . . . Not that he considered rites and ceremonies of primary importance; he knew they were only secondary, but they were to him hallowed channels of religious expression and as such should be preserved and honored. . . .

If he was a conservative in his mode of worship, however, he was essentially a liberal in his religious conviction. Tolerance, universality of outlook, freedom from all prejudice, these formed the keystones of his thought structure. Religion he defined as "the struggle of Spirit against matter," and he gave welcome to whatever helped in the struggle. When someone came with words of condemnation on his

lips, I heard him say: "Never find fault with any form of religion. Differences are all in the external customs. That which makes up the external is the shell. It may be hard and rough and perhaps not to our liking, but it holds a valuable kernel. The kernel of every religion is God. . . . Throw away the idea of 'me and mine,' give up all to God—this is the essential of every religion. This is what Christianity teaches, this is what Mohammedanism teaches, what Hinduism and Zoroastrianism teach, what every religious sect teaches."

On no subject did the Swami talk more frequently or more at length than that of Deity. . . . His own mind was saturated with God-thought. He exemplified in himself what he once said to me, "A man who has realized God must keep on realizing Him all his life." He believed that "to realize God is the aim of every human being whether he knows it or not." "No man," he said, "who has not true love toward God can be religious. Religion begins with attraction to God and no soul will ever find real satisfaction until he has reached God. All bondage comes to an end when man realizes Him. As a matter of fact, all men are loving God, for every man loves eternal life, all knowledge and all blissfulness, and these are God. . . ."

The bigness of his thought swept him a moment into silence, then he went on: "It is true, the average man is not ready to perceive Truth. You must *be* Truth to know Truth. You must live it, and make it a part of your experience, otherwise you cannot know it. The finite can never know the Infinite, but we can have some intellectual perception of what it is. If that were not the case, why should we be so eager to attain it? One must get everything from inside or from Nature. Nature is God's book, and blessed is the man who knows how to read it."

A somewhat bombastic Pundit spent an hour at the monastery one late afternoon. When he had gone, Swami Ramakrishnananda remarked with a shade of displeasure in his voice, "When a man is vain on account of his learning, what does he gain? Even if he has read all the Vedas, he is not qualified to know the Truth. Real learning is that which will enable a man to realize the Truth. . . ."

The Swami did not undervalue the use of intellect; but he showed little tolerance toward that superficial form of intellectuality which consists in mere information about things and knowledge borrowed from books. He believed a man's knowledge should rest on his own experience, not on the experience of others. He was a deep student of the human mind, regarding it as the pivot on which the spiritual life swung. "There is no difference between the purified mind and the true Self of man," he declared. . . . "When we lose all sense of separateness, egotism will go, the mind will become single or pure, and only God will be there. The mind is like a mirror. When it is clean, it gives a perfect reflection; but if it is covered with dust, it gives no reflection at all. The more you can wipe off the dust, the better the reflection you will get. Every mind can be a reflector of eternal Truth, but the simple mind reflects it more clearly. . . ."

Swami Ramakrishnananda himself had a remarkable mind. He possessed the power of original thought to an unusual degree and had also many intellectual attainments; but he made no display of his learning, nor did he allow it to overshadow his spiritual vision. . . . He always believed that it was his knowledge of Sanskrit which constituted his chief qualification for the South Indian work. . . . He often talked to me of those early days. They were full of hardship; but he seemed to glory in the self-denial they demanded. . . . Whether on his way he met hardship or ease mattered little

to the Swami. He never relaxed his ardor. With the same unflagging devotion he continued to meditate and to pray, to serve and to teach, to worship and to study. His study was more interior than outer. The book he read most frequently was the book of his own mind. He delved into its depths and forced it to yield up its secrets. Thus he was able to reach his own solution for many psychological problems. The results of these direct observations were mostly wordless, too subtle to put into words; but occasionally he spoke of them. I remember one evening, when several of us were present in the Monastery hall, he began:

"Why do we want to know? To satisfy something in ourselves. The end of all knowledge is satisfaction and this satisfaction is always one. There are three kinds of knowing,—first, instinctive knowledge, then reasoning, and then inspiration. The lower animals have instinct; much of our knowledge also is instinctive. Then man begins to reason, and as long as he reasons, the ego must be there. From reasoning he can pass on to inspiration, when all knowledge will come to him—not through the process of reasoning, but by direct illumination. All slavery comes to an end when man realizes Truth. . . . Inside the body there is desire and greed; inside the mind there is doubt; inside the world there is change, there is death. Go beyond these and you will find peace and bliss. Until you go beyond them, you can never realize what peace and bliss mean."

Someone asked, "If we go beyond the mind, do we give up the habit of discrimination?"

"To be able to go beyond the mind is the result of the highest discrimination," was the Swami's incisive answer.

"How can we overcome the restlessness of the mind?"

"By fixing it on God. As long as it goes out to the world through the senses, it will be restless. The more a mind is

restless, the weaker it is; the more it is calm, the stronger it is." Then he added with emphasis, "Light the fire of wisdom in your mind and heart, and nothing weak or impure will dare approach you. When that fire is kindled all imperfections and impurities are burned to ashes."

BROTHER SUN

By Laurence Hausman

(From "Little Plays of St. Francis." Reprinted by the kind permission of the author and of the publishers—Jonathon Cape and Harrison Smith, New York.)

Scene: The camp of the Saracens before Damietta, looking out eastward over the sands and lagoons.

In a large circular tent, gorgeously hung with arras of gold and scarlet, the Soldan sits enthroned on a high dais. Upon the steps to right and left, in order of rank, stand his Emirs and Councillors. Before the entrance are armed Soldiers and around the tent-walls Nubian Slaves and Arab Servants. Against the pole of the tent stands the Soldan's Swordbearer. The door is wide open, revealing the red glare of an Eastern day now nearing its end. Before the Soldan stands the Captain of the Guard.

Soldan. Two men, you say, Captain? What like are they?

Captain. Beggars, Soldan, to look upon: ragged, bare-foot, and very weary.

Soldan. Whence come they?

Captain. From the camp of the Infidel—so they say.

Soldan. Had they arms?

Captain. No, Soldan.

Soldan. How came they in?

Captain. They were in our midst before we knew. Because the hand of Heaven seemed on them, our outposts had let them pass.

Soldan. The hand of Heaven?

Captain. As being of those afflicted ones on whom Allah bids us have pity, Soldan.

Soldan. Madmen?

Captain. Such I took them to be when I first saw them. But now, having questioned them, I am in doubt.

Soldan. Wherefor?

Captain. Because, though their speech is sane, what they do is contrary.

Soldan. Aye? How?

Captain. They seem to make mock of us, Soldan; and of the peril they stand in. When I warned them of death they did but smile; when we used them roughly, they seemed grateful to us; and when we put chains on them they laughed and sang. Some say they be magicians, Soldan, and would have no dealings with them.

Soldan. Said they for what cause they came?

Captain. To bring thee peace, Soldan.

Soldan. Peace? Are they ambassadors?

Captain. I know not, Soldan. Their message, they said, was for thee.

Soldan. Well, I will see for myself. Bring them in.

(The Captain goes, followed by his Guard. The Emirs and Councillors show perturbation.)

Councillor. O Soldan, is it forgiven if now we speak?

Soldan. Speak, any who will.

Councillor. Have a care, dread King! For though these men be not armed, they may have power of evil.

Soldan. Very like. Has not the Most High commanded us to fight evil?

Councillor. But these having no arms, Soldan, how canst thou fight them?

Soldan. How can they fight us?

Councillor. By evil enchantments, Soldan.

Soldan. And have we none wiser that can withstand them? See to it. To your charge I commit me. Do ye your office, while I do mine.

Councillor. Commander of the Faithful, it shall be done.

(One of the Councillors, taking from his finger a ring, threads it upon a red cord; the cord is drawn across the front of the dais, the ring suspended upon it during the scene that follows. A sound of chains is heard, and the tread of the Guard approaching. The voice of the Captain outside cries "Halt!" The Captain enters.)

Captain. The prisoners are here, Soldan.

Soldan. Bring them.

(Francis and Brother Illuminato are brought in, and kept closely guarded at a safe and respectful distance from the Soldan's person.)

Who art thou?

Francis. Thy lover and servant, Soldan.

Soldan. Who is this with thee?

Francis. He also is thy lover and servant, Soldan.

Soldan. Whence come ye?

Francis. From the Camp of thine enemy.

Soldan. Of whom, also, ye are?

Francis. We are of the same race, Soldan.

Soldan. Wherefor, then, come ye here?

Francis. To set thee free, O King.

Soldan. From whom?

Francis. From fear.

Soldan. Fear? I fear no man.

Francis. Thou bearest arms, Soldan. He that is without fear bears none.

Soldan. Why then, in the Camp of the Christians also there is fear!

Francis. Aye. Very greatly they fear thee, Soldan.

Soldan. They do well.

Francis. They would do better if they did not fear thee.

Soldan. Dost not thou fear me?

Francis. No, Soldan.

(*This causes no little stir among the Emirs and Council-lors. The Swordsman's hand instinctively takes a better grip on his weapon, as with sidelong glance he waits the word of command.*)

Soldan. Come! What art thou here for?

Francis. To take thy chains from thee.

Soldan. I have no chains.

Francis. O Soldan, are not these thy chains?

Soldan. (*grimly amused.*) Aye: but thou wearest them.

Francis. He that putteth chains upon others is chained also.

(*A murmur of angry astonishment comes from the assembled Councillors.*)

An Emir. When is this man to die, Soldan?

Soldan. Not at thy bidding, Emir. At mine.

Councillors (*in a fierce whisper of impatience.*) Aye!

Soldan. Come hither!

(*The Guard bring Francis to the foot of the dais.*)

I said not "bring him hither." Stand back!

(*The Guard fall back. The Soldan comes down from his throne, takes hold of the fetters, and weighs them in his hand.*)

So these are my chains that thou wearest?

Francis. Very willingly, Soldan.

Soldan. (*sarcastically.*) I thank thee. . . . Thinkest thou that I am in fear of thee?

(*Francis looks from Soldan to suspended ring and back again; and there is a suspicion of amusement in his tone as he answers.*)

Francis. I know not, Soldan.

(The Soldan snaps the thread. The ring falls. Francis stoops, picks up the ring, and hands it to the Soldan.)

Councillor. Beware, Soldan!

Soldan. *(returning to his place.)* Take from him his chains: his also.

(The chains upon Francis and Brother Illuminato are struck off.)

Stand away! Do not hold them! . . . Prisoner, . . . where are my chains now?

Francis. Upon thy heart, Soldan; Yea, and upon thy soul. To us thou hast been gentle and gracious; but not unto thyself. For though thou givest freedom to others, to thine own self thou art yet a prisoner.

(The Soldan lays by the talisman he has been holding.)

Soldan. And from this prison wherein I am,—who shall set me free?

Francis. Thou Prince of Majesty, holder of power and glory, give thyself into my hand, and I will lead thee.

Soldan. Whither?

Francis. To thy Lord and my Lord which died for us.

Soldan. My Lord, thou sayest!

Francis. Aye, for though thou see it not, His Light is already in thee. This is the Light which lighteneth every man that cometh into the world.

Soldan. And thou, also, art a Christian?

Francis. God knows I would I were worthy to be called so.

Soldan. Is the way, then, so hard?

Francis. Nay; but most sweet, and easy, and comforting. And yet I stray!

(There is a pause: outside the light of day begins to fail.)

Soldan. How wouldst thou make me—a Christian?

Francis. I would show thee Christ, Soldan. Or, if by that name thou know Him not, then by His other name which is Love, wherein also dwell Joy and Peace. This have I come to show.

Soldan. Yea; speak!

Francis. Oh, hearken, for this is wonder!

Light looked down and beheld Darkness.

"Thither will I go," said Light.

Peace looked down and beheld war.

"Thither will I go," said Peace.

Love looked down and beheld Hatred.

"Thither will I go," said Love.

So came Light, and shone.

So came Peace, and gave rest.

So came Love, and brought Life.

And the Word was made Flesh, and
dwelt among us.

Then was He betrayed and given up into the hands of sinful men: Light to the darkness of Death, Peace unto the pains of Hell, Love to the separation of the grave. And because the power of Evil prevailed not against Him, these henceforth He holdeth, and they are His. So out of Darkness He wrought Light, and Peace out of the pains of Hell, and out of the prison-house of Death He bringeth us Life Eternal.

Soldan. Knowest thou this of thyself? or did others tell it thee?

Francis. O Soldan, were it not true, wouldst thou not already have slain me?

Soldan. I may slay thee yet, prisoner: for I have not let thee go.

Francis. What I have spoken thou hast heard. How wilt thou fear me less when I am dead?

Soldan. I . . . fear thee?

Francis. When I am dead, Soldan, thou wilt remember me.

Soldan. Go on, prisoner. Say what thou hast to say, while there is yet time.

(It begins to get dark.)

Francis. Soldan, as I came hither, there met me in the way a great army of ants,—many thousands of them, all hither and thither running without rest. What was their toil, whose word they obeyed, I could not tell; but they were all very full of it—in a world of their own. So I stood and looked at them; but though very plainly I saw them, they saw not me. I was nothing to them. Yet, had I so wished, I could have killed every one of them.

Soldan. Wherefor dost thou tell me this?

Francis. Because thou art a great king, Soldan, and I am in thy power; and which of us is to die first—thou or I—we know not. But God, Whom we see not, knows.

Soldan. Which is to die first?

Francis. Aye.

Soldan. Knowest thou not?

Francis. No, Soldan, nor dost thou. For thou art in His hands, even as I am; and He careth for both alike, having for each of us the same compassion.

Soldan. As thou also for the ants?

Francis. Yes, Soldan. And they may have had kings among them,—yet I could not tell which *was* their king,—they being all so much alike—even as we are.

Soldan (to an Attendant.) Slave, bring in the lamps . . . Thou and I alike, dost thou say?

Francis. In the eyes of God, Soldan; aye, and of men also. For look!—thou hast hands, and feet, and so have I: and on each hand five fingers, and to each finger three

joints; and at the end are nails. So also our bodies,—search as thou wilt, we are made alike. Also what thou seest, I see; and what thou hearest, I hear. In all these things we are alike, Soldan, because God has so willed Who made us.

(Lights are brought in; over the Soldan's throne is set a lamp. Round the wall stand Torch-bearers. The outer air goes dark.)

Soldan. That is true. Stand near, Brother Ant; I would look on thee, and see more of that likeness to myself whereof thou speakest. . . . Aye; thou hast a face and eyes, which now see; thou hast limbs, and there is blood in them; thou hast flesh that can feel pain; and thou hast a head and a neck, even as I have. But for all we be so much alike, hast thou power to do presently what I shall do?

Francis. No, Soldan. Many things thou canst do which I cannot.

Soldan. Whence comes that?

Francis. From God, Soldan: not from thy feet, nor thy hands, nor thy head. That which a man does comes from his heart.

Soldan. Truly said.

Francis. And thy heart and mine are two, not one. We be fellow-men, but separate; we look upon each other as strangers. But it is not so that God sees. For we see each with a difference; but He, looking within, sees we are alike.

Soldan. How alike?

Francis. In heart we are alike, Soldan.

Soldan. Canst thou be sure of that?

Francis. Since God made us to the same end, that we might serve Him.

Soldan. I serve not thy God, Christian!

Francis. Many do serve Him, not knowing.

Soldan. The service which I do is—different.

Francis. Many wait on thee, Soldan, whose services are different. But for each there is a place, and all labor to one end. So thou and I,—serving God.

Soldan. What if I serve God by slaying thee?

Francis. Even so as, when good servants are hasty, platters get broken. Yet if thou break this poor platter, God shall pardon thee; and thou wilt still serve Him, though how I know not.

Soldan. And what says the platter, when it is broken?

Francis. I am willing to be broken, great King, if it make thee more careful of others. Many hast thou broken, and little good has it done thee. Peace comes not yet; and all thy breakings shall not bring it thee.

Soldan. Swordsman, draw!

(The Swordsman draws his sword, and stands ready.)

Emirs, Councillors, Judges, Servants of the Prophet, ye have heard this man and what he saith. How say ye? Is he innocent or guilty?

All. Guilty, O King.

Soldan. Unto what penalty?

All. Death.

Soldan. His offence?

Councillor. Great Soldan, this man is a dog and a blasphemer. Against thee, Sword of the Prophet, he hath said evil things, denying thy kingship and power. Also against our holy faith he hath spoken falsely.

Soldan. What saith the Prophet concerning him?

Councillor. That all infidels must perish.

Soldan. Even so, let it be. Swordsman, hither. Have ready thy sword. Make the prisoner to kneel down.

(Francis kneels. Brother Illuminato kneels also, looking toward Francis with a face full of joy.)

Brother Ant, I have heard thee. Hast thou said all thou wouldst say? If not, now speak!

Francis. O Soldan, while I have breath needs must I plead. For I have short life, and little wisdom, and my tongue is feeble. But He, whose messenger I am, is almighty, and infinite, and eternal; and His glory is not as the glory of kings,—being without end. So, if I begin to tell of it, how may I finish?

Soldan (pointing to an hour-glass beside him, the sands of which are nearly run.) A little time I yet give thee. While the sands in this glass still run, speak on!

Francis (stretching out his arms.) As the sun be the King's reign! The wisdom of God be thy rule: the love of God thy possession: the Peace of God, which passeth all understanding, be with thee, Soldan, when thou comest to die!

Soldan (to the Swordsman.) Man, put up thy sword! Loose him: and go! Take with you that other prisoner: do no harm to him. Councillors and Judges, what I do now, I do of myself. Go, all of you!

(They all go out. The Soldan remains seated, with Francis kneeling before him.)

Brother, come hither. . . . Sit near me. . . . Through all the world I have sought thee. Now, in the Camp of mine enemy, I find thee! Oh, wherefor didst thou come?

Francis. To be thy lover and servant, Soldan.

Soldan. That is well: I have great need of thee. In my service thou shalt have power, and riches, and great honor; for I will exalt thee, and make thee a ruler; also thou shalt be taught the truths of our holy faith, and become a believer.

Francis. That cannot be, Soldan. Power is of God, not of kings. Serving all, I rule none, and naught have I of possessions save Poverty. . . . Disband thine armies, Soldan. Fight not against the living God. Sheath thy sword and possess thy land in peace.

Soldan. Peace? Who offers peace?

Francis. He against whom thou fightest, Soldan.

Soldan. 'Tis of thy God thou speakest? Say then: (*He rises*) and speak truth! If I seek Him in the Camp of mine enemies—shall I find Him?

(*Francis bows his head, for it is a question he dares not answer.*)

Francis. Seek Him in thine own heart, Soldan; there shalt thou find peace.

Soldan. Thou hast answered well. . . . And yet thou art still one of them!

Francis. I came to them a traveller from my own land, Soldan.

Soldan. To fight for them?

Francis. Aye: even as I have fought for thee, saying the same words: "Disband your armies; fight not against God; sheath your sword; go back to your own land in peace."

Soldan. And they?

Francis. They were like the ants, Soldan—very full of themselves.

Soldan. Not heeding thee?

Francis. No man can heed that which he sees not—neither with eyes nor with heart.

Soldan (*with a touch of the visionary.*) What, then, have I seen? . . . Nay, I know not. Yet to my ears hath come a voice.

(*The torches and the Torchbearers have gone; and the only light now in the tent is the lamp which burns above the dais. Soldan sits in thought; and for a while there is silence. Presently, as the voice of his reverie, Francis begins speaking.*)

Francis. Look, Soldan, how bright in this tent shines the light! See, on walls, and roof, and armor, and jewels, how

it glitters. But yonder at the door stands night, and thou seest naught of it,—neither the beauty, nor the spaces of heaven which lie over it, nor the stars which are contained there. Because this light has made a covering to thine eyes, therefore do the heavens look dark.

(Francis has risen, and stands looking out into the night.)

O Soldan, in thine own heart seek wisdom! The flame of Kingship and power is brief, and short-reaching, and by a breath it is put out. And with it shall depart the honor and fear and obedience and service which men render thee. These go, but thou remainest. Then, as a sleeper, that awakens when the lamp in his chamber is quenched, sees the door (which was darkness) changed to a window of light, and with his eyes searches the night, beholding the great spaces of heaven, and the stars that are hung in it, so in that day shalt thou see the standing of thy soul, and the home of thy inheritance to which thou travellest.

(The Soldan has risen, and coming down from the dais, he stands beside Francis.)

God is great, and infinite, and full of compassion. Thou art but a little thing: yet in His hand He holdeth and loveth thee. O Soldan, in that day of thine awakening, remember me, thy little lover and servant, and pray for me!

Soldan (drawing him to the light.) Come; aye, closer; for again would I look upon thy face, and know more of thee. . . . *(They stand eye to eye under the lamp, silent awhile.)* Well said, Brother Ant, When I come to die, I shall remember thee.

(He mounts the dais, strikes a bell, and puts out the lamp. The night grows luminous without. Presently in the doorway two Attendants are seen standing motionless.)

There is thy road: there is thy star, and thy heaven! Go, thou art freer than I. Alas, that in my Kingdom never shall I see thee again.

Francis. In the Kingdom of God, Brother, I pray that I shall see thee.

Soldan. There, when thou comest, look for me in thine own heart. If thou find me, there shall I be.

Francis. Amen, Soldan. So—if God will!

Soldan. Take this signet, show it to the Captain of the Guard. Let him give command that thou and thy companion return in safety—to the Camp of mine enemy.

Francis. Alas, then, for peace have I failed.

Soldan. Who knows! . . . Farewell, Brother Ant.

Francis. Farewell, great and gracious King, Brother-servant of my Lord!

(Francis goes out, followed at a signal from the Soldan, by two Attendants. The Soldan stands looking after him.)

Soldan. Farewell, Brother Sun.

(From outside comes the cry of the Muezzin calling the faithful to prayer: "There is one God, Allah, and Mahomet is His Prophet!" The Soldan bares his feet, stands looking toward Mecca, and prays. THE CURTAIN falls.)

Ours is an age of inventions: nowadays, with the rich a lift saves the trouble of climbing the stairs. And I, fain would I too find a lift to bear me up unto God, for I am too little to climb the rugged steps of perfection.

Then I turned to the Holy Scriptures, seeking, . . . and I read these words: "Whosoever is a *very little one*, let him come to me." Then I drew nigh unto God, divining truly that I had discovered what I sought. Wishing, however, to know what He would do with the *very little one*, I continued my research, and here is what I found: "You shall be carried on the breast and upon the knees; as one whom the mother caresseth, so will I comfort you."

—Saint Thérèse of Lisieux.

ICICLES OF LIGHT

By Gerard Carter

Animated icicles of light—that is physical man. Physical scientists now speak of matter as congealed radiation. The physical body is composed of matter. Things that are equal to the same thing are equal to one another. Earthy men are solidified, crystallized light, radiation, that tenuous, intangible, infinite substance known to the mystic of all ages as that out of which all things come.

Consider the electric refrigerator. Every housewife is familiar with the production of ice cubes. Let us make moulds to produce little figures like men and women; make moulds for katydids and kangaroos, for monkeys and mustangs. Let us multiply many fold the capacity of the ice box, and put it aboard a great ship. Now we are on our way to the wide spaces of the landless ocean!

While on the way, we can color and doctor our liquids as we choose. We can make creamy white figures, tinted a delicate pink. Harsh little men can be produced from a rough sandy mixture. Sallow men, swarthy men, red men: all shades and grades can be made. There will be Hindus, Japanese, Chinese, French, Spanish, Scandinavians, Americans. These with our animals, birds and miscellaneous list will represent our world.

All ready? Let's cast the figures overboard. Our ship, of course, is standing still, so as not to interfere too much with the life of our little world.

Now what do we see? It is a most instructive and marvelous theatre! Our images are moving, mingling, bobbing up and down in such peculiar and fascinating manner we can almost imagine that they have a separate life of their own. Here one is circling to the left, there another, caught in an opposite little eddy, is passing to the right. Now this

little aggregation is caught up on the heights of a roller, while another lot of the figures is in the depths of a depression. Soon comes a huge wave and they are all tossed high, only to fall a few seconds later into the very valley of the sea. And all the time, entirely unconscious to themselves, our little figures are melting, changing, disintegrating.

No; there is no need to point out the vivid, convincing parallels to our human life. One with half an eye will see them at once: that our bodies are tiny bits of congealed substance floating in a vast sea of the identical substance; that we are moved by that universal Mind and Life; that all the time our bodies are melting away, with all our boasted medical skill as powerless to prevent their disintegration as a little figure of ice is powerless against the melting warmth of the ocean. After all, when it comes to the ultimates, a Queen Victoria can cry out "Millions in money for an inch of time!" as piteously and as helplessly as a coolie. Who can turn back for one second the tides of death or birth? We are all tinted figures floating in the living sea.

And yet these figures of tinted ice can be melted over a flame in a vessel of gold, and their substance so changed that they take wings and mount the silvery sky, and who knows but that some faint essence of their being may be drawn on and on to lose itself in the effulgence of the radiant sun.

ESSENCE

By Sister Daya

I am pure spirit—spirit through and through!
He who would know me must be spirit too.
Pure love am I and love I bring to birth:
There's none can measure me with thoughts of earth.
I am a light, a subtle fragrance! Lo—
He who would hold me, he must let me go.

REPORT

VEDANTA CENTRE OF BOSTON

The month of November was crowded with varied activities at the Vedanta Centre of Boston. The Sunday Services were well attended, but the Tuesday evening Classes showed special growth in numbers and in the genuine interest of the people.

On November 17th, Swami Paramananda gave an impromptu dinner to his friends and, although it was decided upon at the eleventh hour, over eighty people attended. A devoted member arranged to have negro Spirituals sung by five small negro children, and this was most heartily enjoyed by the entire gathering.

The following Tuesday, November 21st, following the regular Class, an informal reception was held to bid Swami Paramananda *bon voyage* on his forthcoming trip to India. A most rare contribution toward the evening's entertainment was a Chamber Concert given by Mr. Hansen with the assistance of four other able musicians. The chief number on the program was an original quintet in five movements by Mr. Hansen, inspired by the atmosphere of the Vedanta Centre and dedicated to Swami Paramananda. In this Mr. Hansen showed himself to be as distinguished in the composition of music as he is in its interpretation. Miss Sherwood put it very aptly when she said, "May we all be inspired to express our ideal as beautifully." She then spoke with profound feeling of Swami Paramananda, referring to the relentless activity carried on by him for the last twenty-six years, and expressed deep appreciation and gratitude on behalf of herself and the entire audience.

To mark the occasion, Swami Paramananda's long promised book, "Healing Meditations," was introduced as a companion volume to "Right Resolutions," along with a new

pamphlet publication—"Christ: The Divine Talisman"—suitable to send as a Christmas greeting. Altogether, it was an evening long to be remembered.

The climax of the Swami's stay in Boston, however, was the Thanksgiving Service. The Swami's inspirational talk intermingled with prayers and supplications offered to the one Giver and unfailing Protector touched every heart and threw new light upon the Feast of Thanksgiving, which is traditional not only in America but in many lands and among many people.

The Swami left Boston on November 25th. During his absence, all Services and Classes will be faithfully carried on by Sister Daya. Breaking his trip westward, he stopped a few hours at Dayton, Cincinnati and Louisville speaking at all three places before large and appreciative audiences. Train connection gave him time at Kansas City and St. Louis to have a pleasant visit with friends.

ANANDA-ASHRAMA

At the Ananda-Ashrama, California, through the warm co-operation of friends old and new, the vital quality of the work has been maintained in the weeks that Swami Paramananda has been away.

Srimati Gayatri Devi, in charge of all platform activities, has infused with her fervent, devoted spirit all who have come to hear her at the Ashrama, or at the Hollywood Branch-centre.

With the approach of Christmas, the Ashrama Arts and Crafts Department is busy filling orders for weaving, hand-illumined cards and other dainty products, while the Honey Department finds itself fairly flowing with its golden nectar. Music, also, is in the air, and with the trained assistance of Mr. and Mrs. Jascha Gegna and other gifted friends, should help to make the Season beautiful and harmonious.

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